IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR AN ONLINE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

A Case Study in Logistics

Lauri Aho

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Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences

TAMPEREEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
Tampere University of Applied Sciences

ABSTRACT

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Through a case study, this thesis examines possibilities to how can Logiera, a regional logistics integrator, use social media as a shared learning environment for its forthcoming logistics business network.

Using literature sources and concrete examples, this paper explains the concepts that pertain to social media, including its emergence, significance in corporate use and possibilities in supply chain integration as well as issues that relate to the deployment of social media systems.

Combining the theory with primary results, which were acquired through interviews with Logiera's partner companies, the paper then discusses the main aspects that should be taken into consideration upon implementing a social media platform in a network of businesses.

The implications of the paper conclude that emergent social media software could indeed help integrating distinct logistics operators, bring higher efficiency levels and enable collective industry development through information sharing. The research also shows that a clear and comprehensive deployment plan is required in order to facilitate a successful implementation and ensure user engagement.

Accordingly, a concrete social media implementation plan was agreed as the outcome of the thesis. In the event the supposed online business network is in operation, further studies are recommended to evaluate the success of the implementation and, more importantly, to find out whether the achieved results correspond to the expected benefits when using social media as a tool to coordinate business cooperation.

Keywords: social media, supply chain management, online business community

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1 INTRODUCTION

"Self-motivated learner will be in the web," envisioned Bill Gates in a panel discussion about the future of education. He addressed those words specifically for institutions. In broader terms there is an emerging format of online learning that, enabled by social media, can be taken on to any field where learning is imaginable.

At first the claim may sound out of proportion, but if the concept of learning is viewed in its essence, the statement is quite admissible. For example, when a friend shares a link to a useful article, document, video clip or audio piece – a type of information sharing that often happens in social media – that is also likely to involve learning.

Without the restriction of place or time, social media enables diverse possibilities to learn in an online community. Logiera, a regional logistics integrator, resolved to commission this research in order to find out how social media could be used to support learning and information sharing between logistics service providers in an online business community.

Logiera's objective is to form a network of logistics businesses that operate within the region and engage them in synergic cooperation. The benefits of cooperatives have been realized long ago – in fact, the first cooperatives were recorded before the industrial era. Beyond mutual business benefits there are also environmental gains, which may be achieved through enhanced cooperation. However, discovering, or more aptly learning about mutual benefits and coordinating cooperation is demanding given the complexity of today's business dealings. Modern business cooperation calls for coordination tools that enable efficient, yet flexible information exchange; hence the idea of utilizing social media to initiate and coordinate present-day business cooperation.

Set by the commissioner, the objective of this thesis was to find out how Logiera can use social media as a shared learning environment for its forthcoming logistics businesses. Regardless of lacking a clear hypothetical question from the commissioner's side, it soon became evident that the real issue in introducing a social media environment of any kind was to, first, verify that it is actually needed, and second, to engage people to use it. Established along these lines, the main research question to

which this thesis attempts to answer is: can social media be used in business to business cooperation. Sub-questions that derive from the main question are:

- What are the conceivable uses of social media in professional networking and employee training as well as news and information sharing?
- How to engage people in using work-related social media software?
- What are the requirements from the organizing company, the member companies and the actual users in the context of online business community?

2 THE THESIS COMMISSIONER

Logiera, the commissioner of this thesis, is a regional logistics integrator. It was initiated in June 2010 as a spin-off program under Tampere Region Economic Development Agency, Tredea Ltd., which also acted as the initial funder of the undertaking. (Tredea Ltd. is an organization that maintains and strengthens Pirkanmaa region's attractiveness and ensures prosperity of businesses. For further information, see www.tredea.fi.) The creator and also the director of the program is Jari Saarenpää. At the time of writing this paper, Logiera was going over an incubation period that involved generic business planning (mission, vision, strategy, service line, processes and financing, etc.). The next rational phase in the foreseeable future is to privatize Logiera's business and launch the first service pilots.

2.1 Logiera's objectives

Logiera's underlying objective is to make logistics in Tampere more effective, environmentally friendly and inclusive by offering modern logistics concepts for the use of operators (Logiera, 2010). These intents translate to better entrepreneurial possibilities, societal benefits, regional vitality, reduced carbon footprint, and ultimately set a scene for sustainable future for the Pirkanmaa region. In the background, there is also a desire to make Pirkanmaa a more appealing traffic node within Finland. All this would be out of reach without working in close cooperation with logistics operators in the region and promoting them to co-opt principles of sustainable development. Hence, through its endeavors to bring together companies, Logiera denotes to an umbrella organization that unites the logistics industry by means of information exchange.

The key to efficiency and sustainability, in Logiera's view, can be achieved by taking a holistic look of supply chains and opening information flows between logistics service providers however small or large they may be. An article by Lee (2010) in Harvard Business Review encapsulates this conception rather well:

> *"Firms often take a piecemeal approach to sustainability. They demand that suppliers replace materials with greener ones, for instance, and they tweak their own operations with recycling, energy-efficient equipment and the like."*

Instead of incremental ecological measures, companies should take a holistic approach and pursue broader structural change, which in practice means identifying opportunities that span the supply chain, reinventing manufacturing processes, and even linking up with competitors to tackle challenges of scale. This leads to greener supply chain that requires less capital, has lower operation costs and provides competitive advantage. (Lee, 2010)

2.2 Support of Government policies

Recent course in transportation politics propel Logiera's reformative objective. Intended for the use of its member states, the European Union introduced an ideal model of green city logistics in 2009. Subsequently, Ministry of Transport and Communications in Finland accepted a proposal "Finland's strategy for intelligent transport" for its first ever national strategy for intelligent transport.

Based partly on the adopted political direction, a development program was devised and launched conjointly by several private and public sector institutions (Sitra's Public Leadership and Management Programme, Ministry of Transport and Communications; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Environment; Ministry of Employment and the Economy as well as Finnish Transport Agency; Trafi; RYM Oy and Tivit Oy).

Named Transport Revolution, the program addresses a range of recently emerged issues, such as climate change, urbanization and urban sprawl, global competition of trade and labor location between territories, transformation of demographic structure and aging population, reversal of budged growth to budged scarcity as well as digitalization and the development of intelligent technologies. The inclusive Transport Revolution program comprises of several subprograms that represent specific challenge areas (Kostiainen, 2011). With a pilot role on sustainable urban logistics, Logiera is one of the affiliated programs.

2.3 The reason why Logiera was established

The rationale for Logiera arise from a multitude of grounds; some are broad global trends that prevail in the industry and some account to local challenges that the region is about to face in the future. The municipal population of Tampere is expected to increase by 19 % before 2030, verging on 0,5 million people (Salminen, 2010). Population

growth combined with approximately 21 300 enterprises (Tilastokeskus, 2011) that operate in the region generate a need for logistical services to which the current arrangement cannot respond efficiently while at the same time sustaining environmentally friendly values.

A straightforward measure to accommodate anticipated growth is to expand the current capacity of transportation. However, in the long term that option will result in unsustainable environmental conditions and worsened quality of life. Evident consequences due to intensified traffic correspond to rise in air pollution, diminished road safety and aggravated congestion. Traffic is also the outstanding cause of noise pollution. From a global perspective, all forms of transportation use up natural resources either directly as in fuel consumption or indirectly as in vehicle manufacturing and maintenance. Besides production and repairs, in the course of transportation, vehicles emit exhaust gases that have a negative impact on the climate change.

Physical logistics expansion is favorable from the economical perspective, but as discussed above, an increment of any degree has a negative impact on the environment. For that reason, and ideally before growth is realized, it is sensible to seek for ways to improve the efficiency of existing logistics operations as far as possible. Sidestepping the harmful pitfalls observed in direct capacity expansion, Logiera streamlines existing supply chain processes by combining logistics service providers with so called intelligent logistics systems.

Those systems comprise of sophisticated resource planning and monitoring tools that process raw logistics data as well as of social media software designed to create a commonplace for the operators. This thesis plays an important role in addressing and solving the issues that Logiera will face in executing the social media part.

2.4 Logiera’s core services

Logiera does not assume possession of physical distribution network (e.g. warehouses, distribution centers, vessels, vehicles, infrastructure or operative workforce). Instead, as a fourth party logistics (4PL) operator (FIGURE 1), Logiera bases its business on management of information flows. Logiera’s service portfolio consists of highly accessible enterprise resource planning (ERP) modules that do not require substantial

hardware or software investments from the operator. This deployment method is equivalent to software as a service (SaaS). Typical for SaaS are pay-as-you-go subscriptions – the client pays for the time used or a period agreed in the service contracts – and the possibility to use the service through an ordinary web browser. For Logiera, the subscriptions that relate to use of these software are the main source of revenue.

Through information management and administration, Logiera attends to three cores that form the basis of effective logistics (FIGURE 1). In accordance with European Commission's model for sustainable transportation, the three cores are green city logistics, intermodal green corridors, and networked intelligent logistics.

Comprising of terminals, hubs and other physical nodes in the distribution channel, green city logistics cover the basic logistics operations that are carried out physically. Intermodal green corridors refer to information management between various interest groups, which is of great importance in co-modal transportation, (European Commission defines co-modality as the efficient use of different modes on their own and in combination) and vendor managed inventories.

Consisting of, for example, social media learning environment and modular IT-systems, the third core, networked intelligent logistics, account for information management within the logistics service provider network. Out of all the areas Logiera attends to, this thesis focuses on the social media part.

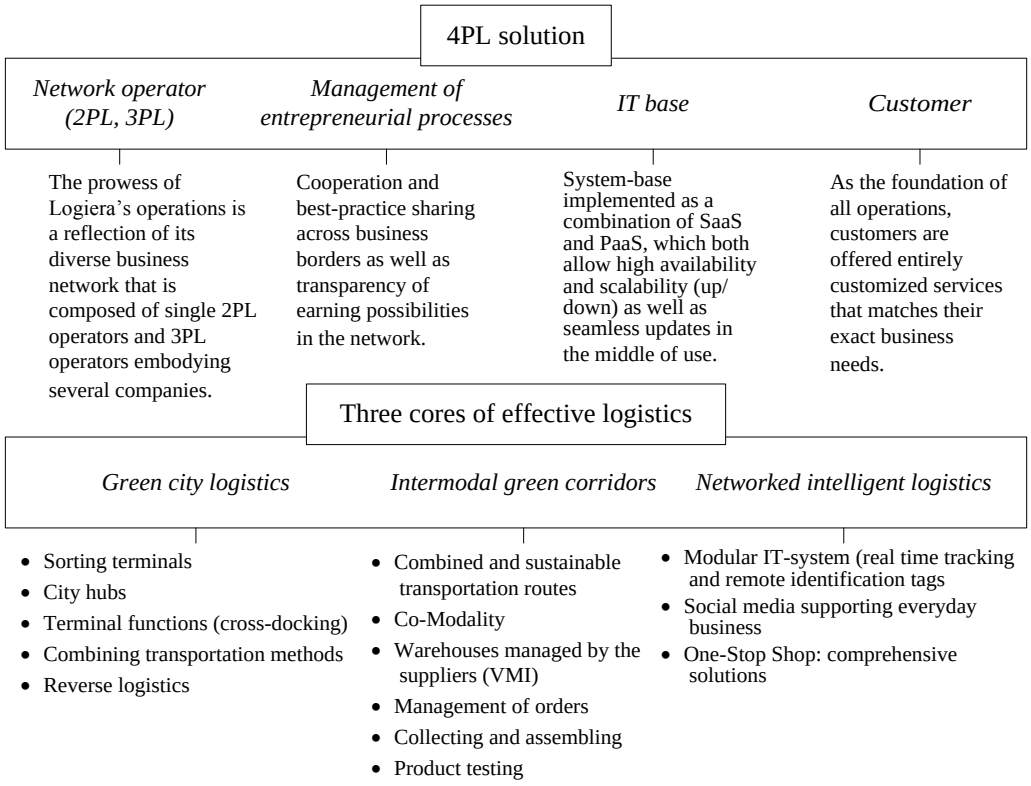


FIGURE 1. Logiera's 4PL solution and core elements in effective logistics

3 SOCIAL MEDIA

During primary data collection phase, a considerable amount of time was spent to discuss about topics related to social media. Through listening to the interviewees, it became evident that the perception of social media is likely to vary depending on the person in question. To ensure that the informants' views were uniform, a brief dialog about what is meant by social media was necessary.

Under the above reasoning, the following chapter describes at length the concept of social media and the elements pertaining to it; first, by defining social media and explaining its recent emergence in the corporate world; second, by viewing its role as communication method; and third, by explaining its possible relation with supply chain management. This is followed by an introduction to the barriers of introducing social media at corporate level. The chapter concludes in a concrete implementation framework, which was also used in Logiera's social media deployment strategy (found in Appendix 5).

3.1 Defining social media

The term social media evolved in the beginning of 21st century, reaching Finland around 2006. In short time it became a popular topic and, as a consequence, authors who wrote about social media produced a range of definitions for it. But before concrete definitions started to root, social media was just a coined buzz-word. Lacking an explicit definition, the phenomenon was explained by listing some of the example web-services that bore features of social media. E.g. social media is what we know as YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook and the services alike. This kind of adduced meaning of social media is likely to leave room for assumptions or misunderstandings and therefore it is appropriate to look at some of the current definitions that pertain to social media.

Given the basis that social media comprises of services that existed before the term was coined, it is clear that there are identifiable features to it. Erkkola (2008) said, *"Social Media has been a hot topic in the Internet, yet it still lacks a clear definition."* Three years ago, Erkkola's notion may have held up, but that is a long time in the history of social media. Today, plenty of definitions are in fact available.

Kallila & Toikkanen (2009) define social media as *"a process in which individuals and groups create common import with the help of content, communities and web-based technology."* Different from other definitions, in this, social media is specified as a process. The process-like nature comes from the conception that user interactions have an effect on the operation of used media, which again influence users' own choices and actions (Erkkola, 2008).

Lietsala & Sirkkunen (2008) note that social media web services assume social networks and creativity of participants of one or more communities. They emphasize that human linkages and ingenuity are important components of social media. In their view, the internet based applications would not count as social media without the participation of people and their social input.

A quite broadly accepted definition of social media has been pronounced by Kaplan & Haenlein. Social media is *"a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)."* The two authors set aside the process-like thinking, and instead underline social media as the paradigm where Web 2.0 technology is the enabler and users are the content creators. In a broader, less technology weighed view, social media is "a concept that encompasses the dissemination of information via highly accessible publishing systems by means of social interaction (Isuru, 2010). Web 2.0 will be discussed closer later in chapter 3.2.

The concept of social media is maturing degree by degree and the debate on its definition has gradually calmed. From the above it can be concluded that social media is a relatively recent concept pertaining to highly accessible systems based on Web 2.0, which enable online social interaction and common content creation. Conceivable social media is not only a distinct invention but a result of surrounding conditions that have passed from a state to another over time. These changes culminate in three areas: changes in society, changes in software and changes in hardware.

3.1.1 Societal changes

Technology and especially the Internet has become an inseparable part of modern society. Many of the everyday errands like banking, insurance and taxation have been

partly or completely available through the web. Likewise, web related services have crept up in people's social life. A look in the statistics shows that people in Finland are active users of social web: little over half (56 %) of the 16 to 74-year-old people had used Internet several times a day and in the same age bracket 42 % had registered to social networking services (Tilastokeskus, 2010). A survey of time spent in social media by The Nielsen Company (2010) conducted in 2009 tells the average time, which global consumers devoted for social media sites in one month was 5 hours and 35 minutes – 2,5 hours more than in 2008. The survey concerned 10 countries and so it does not give the absolute truth of global consumer behavior, yet it provides a picture of social media's growing presence in our lives.

Facebook, one of the most frequently visited web pages in the world claims to have over 500 million users (Facebook, 2010), which, somewhat vaguely but strikingly portrays the popularity of social media services. Taking a share of people's free time and shaping new ways of communication, social media services have clearly become a part of today's society and culture, and in turn, people have begun to expect all the time more of the world wide web.

3.1.2 Software changes

Web-sites based on the principles of social media have proliferated Internet starting from the early 21st century. A common Internet user can name a handful of social media sites but the breadth of social media is much more profound. Wikipedia, a social media service itself, lists close to 200 major active social networking websites that have emerged during the past decade (Wikipedia, 2011). Developments in the software design side have allowed faster and more sophisticated design of web pages so that they may be launched with fewer expenses and within a relatively short timeframe.

3.1.3 Technological changes

Along with developments in software side the advancement of technology has aided the use of social media. Not so long ago voice modems were used to access Internet. Typical to the time was slow line speed, unreliable connection and relatively expensive ISP charges, due to which browsing experience was static, and information transmitted mainly one way from the server to the client.

According to a survey concerning the use of information and communication technology, 82% of the households in Finland possessed one (or more than one computer), and four out of five households had subscribed to fixed or wireless broadband (Tilastokeskus, 2010). A survey that measures the state of Internet in global scale gauged the average connection speed in Finland at 4,1 Mbps (Akamai, 2010), adding to the advancements in telecommunications technology. Rate is mediocre by comparison to European average, yet being 73 times faster than a traditional voice modem, 4,1 Mbps allows a range of online activities that were not possible earlier. In using social media e.g. streaming videos smoothly, having online conversations and working with location based services, a broadband connection together with fixed cost plan are essential.

The technological changes are not apparent only in home computer broad bands but in mobile phone industry as well. Smartphones or devices that run an open (to new apps) operating system and are permanently connected to the Internet (Litchfield, 2010), have become increasingly common. Together with third party applications (gadgets) and relatively inexpensive mobile Internet access, smartphones have become central tools to hook up in social media.

Finally there are the server-side developments. Successful social media sites can grow from few hundred users to over a million users in a fairly short time. In addition to normal visitor traffic, users generate an immense amount of data while using a social media service. For example, in YouTube, approximately 35 hours of video are being uploaded every minute (YouTube, 2011). Data transfers of this scale necessitate what is called scalability, i.e. the ability of a system or network to process growing volumes of data or accommodate that growth.

3.2 Web 2.0

O'reilly Media (2005) coined the phrase "Web 2.0" in a brainstorming session to address the technological and use-related changes of the Internet, which were caused by the burst of the dot-com bubble in 2001. The phrase hints to an improved version of the World Wide Web. However, literally speaking that is not the case. The improvements seen by O'reilly Media were in networking, communicating, collaborating and sharing.

Earlier, the Internet was seen somewhat as one way communication channel. Just as other available media (books, newspapers, TV), the Internet disseminated information but did not allow dynamic interaction. Maintaining an attractive home page for example was cumbersome and required at least an understanding of HTML, a dedicated server, and a domain name. Nowadays setting up an advanced web site with dynamic features takes less than five minutes with the help of WordPress.org or Blogger.com. Likewise, ordinary internet users are allowed to manage page content in multiple ways such as edit, share, (re)twit, comment etc.

Web sites that used to be static are now dynamic, and the volume of data between the terminal and the server runs both ways. In a Web 2.0 versus Web 1.0 setup, Britannica Online would represent a traditional Web 1.0 service, whereas Wikipedia, with its user created articles, would represent the new wave of Web 2.0.

The possibility to move information both ways and interact with other users has assumed service providers with a new form of content production: user generated content. Professionally produced content has diminished as the service providers have taken the role of middle hands. They are offering a technological framework onto which users can upload self-produced content. At an increasing rate, content is being generated and modified by same users who at the same time are the main users of the content. These types of users are specified as prosumers. The term has varying meanings, but in context of social media it refers to people who are both producers and consumers of a given service.

3.3 Communication in social media

Being social is to communicate, and to communicate one needs a medium. The medium may be a face-to-face chat at the office water cooler, email, phone, or the medium can be a virtual space like LinkedIn or Facebook. Be it a physical or a non-physical medium, throughout the time each increment to the means of communication has influenced the way people interact and exchange information. For example, prior the time of telephones people relied on meeting in person and sending letters or telegrams. When telephone became a common household item the velocity of communication accelerated. People no more needed to wait for letters from their distant relatives.

While the amount of communication remained more or less the same, speed with which information travelled increased. Still, however, people were physically constrained: where there was no telephone line available no call could be made. The introduction of cellular phones removed the location-obstacle. Later many other innovative communication means followed – social media among the latest of them.

Just like email and telephone did in the past, social media has, as a technological advancement and as an increment to the existing means of communication, changed the way people engage in social interaction. Letters as well as emails are still being sent and people continue to meet eye to eye but also a large part of communication happens in social media, and without social media that communication might not take place at all.

For instance videos in YouTube or photos in Flickr – it would be troublesome to publish the same quantity of content by using earlier means of communication. I personally believe that if all the messages and status updates in social media would have to be telephoned or mailed to the same recipients instead of simply typing them onto profile page, this type of communication would not take place in at all.

Some people thrive from this new form of communication some despise it saying that the quality of communication has actually gone worse. Overall, it is yet fair to say that social media has increased the volume, the speed and the character of present-day communication.

3.4 Social media in business use

Existing social media services have found their place as considerable sources of business related information. Broadly labeled as social networking sites, Boyd & Ellison (2007) define them as,

> *"Web‐based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi‐public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system."*

For example, head-hunting and professional contacting happens today in the business-oriented networking site, LinkedIn. Besides the adoption of external social media

services (such as LinkedIn) companies are progressively incorporating social software in to their business operations. At least three factors, which have given impetus for combining business processes with social media can be identified; they are intra-company communication, integrated marketing communications and thrust from the private side.

3.4.1 Integrated marketing communications

Integrated marketing communication in context of social media refers to marketing efforts that are disseminated via any of the existing social media services. The benefits of marketing in social media are cost-efficiency, widespread coverage and viral message dispersal. Metaphorically, advertising on a bustling street is just as worthwhile as advertising in social web – the difference is that in social web the marketing message can spread and evolve in unexpected and uncontrollable ways. In order to influence purchasing decisions and create brand awareness, businesses want to be where their target markets are. Hence, as so many modern-day consumers are found in online services, social media has become an important element of the marketing mix.

Social media's functionality and superior ability to reach people at a personal level has made it a strong and economic way to implement marketing campaigns. Marketing aspect may have been the first factor in opening the eyes of business owners but private side also has played its role in the process.

3.4.2 Thrust from the private side

To some degree, the impetus for introducing social software at enterprise level comes from the consumer side (Otala & Pöysti, 2008). Private people have become accustomed to using social media services in daily life as it has, among other things, given a possibility to keep in touch with friends, form networks or interest groups, share content and plan events. Companies have observed that their employees demand same possibilities at the workplace. In other words, as social media applications (such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Wikipedia) have become a norm in peoples' private lives they have become to expect similar tools from corporations (Isuru, 2010). In my view, the impetus will grow profounder by time; next generations learn the benefits of social media early on, and as they take over the work force, they also bring that knowledge into organizations.

3.4.3 Intra-company communication

Less obvious uses for social media include ways to gain operational efficiencies through better internal communication as well as ways to help create social networks amongst employees (Kowal, 2010). The advantages of social software are parallel with the aforementioned Web 2.0 characteristics (networking, communicating, collaborating and sharing of information). Assimilation of the above Web 2.0 characteristics in to business side has emerged in a concept known as Enterprise 2.0. Enterprise 2.0 relates to a modernized way of implementing corporate communication.

Communication is a key component in all kinds of functions inside a company. Be it logistics, R&D, accounting or sales, each field requires cross and intra-divisional communication to function efficiently. Hence, streamlining and organizing corporate communication is one way to enhance business operations; and social software is there to address just that need.

In describing the reasons to why companies use social media internally, Otala & Pöysti (2008) note that the motive for most companies has been a desire to tap into every employees' latent knowledge and expertise as well as getting them involved in developing the enterprise. Bartlett-Brag (2009, p. 16) agrees with this view in regard to organizational learning. She says,

> *"By integrating social software, organizations can generate powerful learning networks which create a platform that extends from simple individual actions, to links that connect people for a common learning goal, to connecting learners with others beyond the boundaries of their current learning contexts."*

Social media integration can be observed in corporate intranets for instance. Earlier known to be static and monotonic, intranets have now taken in features of social software, or in some cases they have been completely replaced with social media systems like intra-company wiki software. Wikis are a social-software tool that can support learning and knowledge building in specific ways (Cunningham & Leuf, 2001).

External corporate wikis are also gaining foot. There are several cases where companies have complemented their support service with a wiki site for their clients. Suffice to say

that Atlassian Pty. Ltd., a provider of corporate wiki software known as Confluence, has more than 22 000 clients around the globe, including Finnair, Nokia and over 300 other companies in Finland (Atlassian, n.d.).

Social software can also assist in the interim of strategy implementation, whose success depends largely on sufficient and appropriate communication. In 2008, the mobile manufacturer Nokia launched a program named Nokia Booster to bring the company over a period organizational change, which was caused by economic turmoil.

Initiating a traditional top-down change would not have engaged the employees in a best possible way, and with operations around the globe this would have taken too much time. In order to reach over 5000 key members of staff and allow them to become part of the solution, Nokia used a combination of emerging social-network technologies and face-to-face workshops.

A survey conducted across the business showed that those who participated in Booster program "were clearer about their objectives, more likely to work in the new project based mode, more satisfied with Nokia as a place to work and higher feelings of personal achievement." The benefits of creating an intra-company social network in Nokia's case were:

- *Fast, global scalability.* Employees could efficiently converse on important issues, share ideas and knowledge and ask for help from each other regardless of their geographies, hierarchies or functions.

- *Shared agenda.* The online community allowed employees to be active and make the company's agenda their agenda. Instead of being passive listeners, employees participated in the reform in various aspects.

- *Encouraged co-creation.* Online communities facilitate and boost the speed of open innovation. Strategic directions can evolve quickly from outlines to concrete ideas on operational changes.

- *Focus on the journey instead of event.* Instead of independent event, the online community provided employees an integral journey through organizational change.

With the aim of keeping energy levels high, different parties were involved in maintaining the Booster community. Content experts posted messages, articles or presentations, senior managers published videos, quizzes and for example mystery shopping assignments. (Gratton, 2010)

Lakkala (2010) has compared the working methods in online community in contrast to ordinary corporate communication (FIGURE 2). He argues that too often discussion focuses around tools and services of social media but not on the advantages that they actually enable. With this in mind, he has devised a three-phase framework that evaluates company's degree of communication, and consequently helps a company to decide whether social software could help their business.

- In phase 1 emails, physical meetings and locally edited files govern daily working methods. This is the most common and safe stage where companies are, but it is where the problems are also apparent: time gets wasted in meetings and knowing what others are doing in the company is difficult.

- Phase 2 is a step towards online methods. Phone meetings, virtual meetings and video conferences take over physical meetings and instant messaging replaces some of the emails. Documents are stored in network drives or document management systems so that they are accessible online.

- In phase 3 social software tools are adopted as well. Part of communication is conveyed through blogs. Documents are transformed into wiki sites and instead of holding meetings for decision-making, online forums facilitate many of the decisions.

The method indicates that social software improves processes that require collaboration between people who can benefit from transparency of information. Community based work itself is not the source of real value but it should offer benefits in comparison to other working methods (Lakkala, 2010).

It is difficult to answer where modern organizations stand in Lakkala's three communication phases. That depends, for instance, on organization's industry, size and culture. General belief, however, seems to be that small and agile IT companies are best at utilizing all three communication phases.

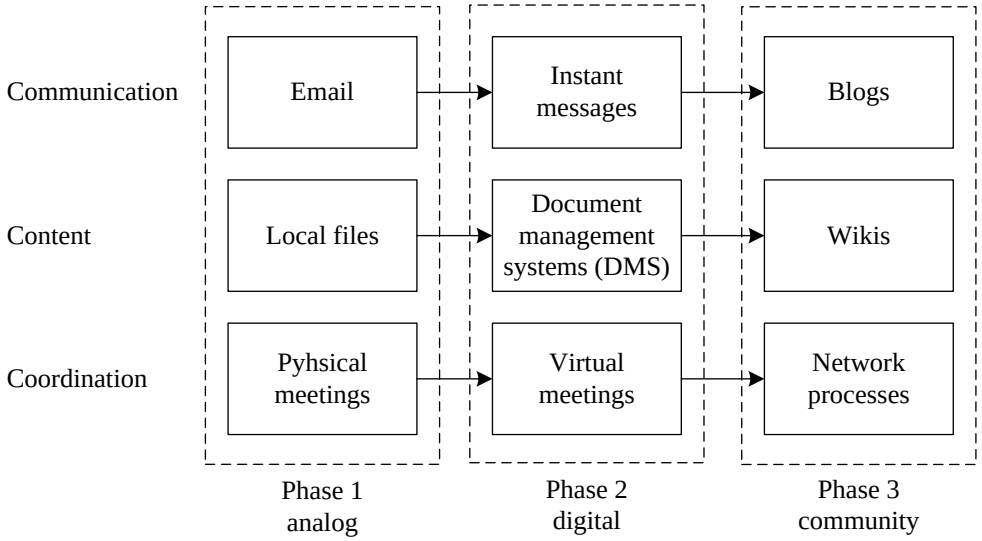


FIGURE 2. Phases of working methods in corporate communication (Lakkala, 2010)

3.5 Supply chain management along with social media

The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals defines supply chain management (SCM) as "the planning and management of all activities involved in sourcing and procurement, conversion, and all logistics management activities. Importantly, it also includes coordination and collaboration with channel partners, which can be suppliers, intermediaries, third party service providers, and customers. In essence, supply chain management integrates supply and demand management within and across companies (CSCMP, n.d.)."

Supply chains are highly reliant on information technology. With the help of IT, organizations are able to monitor transaction intensive activities within the SCM precisely and in real time. In the above definition of SCM, all activity areas are, more or less, enhanced by IT. Hence, systems of digital information exchange have become a cornerstone of an efficient SCM.

Further evolution of IT systems has drawn attention to ways of improving product quality, customer services and operation efficiency by supply chain collaboration (Wang et al., 2007). However, it is important to notice that majority of the data flowing in SCM is of raw, transactional nature that does not necessarily contribute to coordination and collaboration with suppliers, intermediaries, third party service

providers or customers. Collaboration and cooperation calls for well-organized and preferably personal relationship management.

3.5.1 How can social media help in brining businesses together

Cross-company cooperation for one thing requires complex coordination, at which traditional means such as email and telephone are ineffective and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems seem cumbersome. Seeing that social media facilitates networking, communication, collaboration and sharing of information, there are faint signals of employing social software as an advanced coordination tool in partnerships.

Besides the new ways, by which supply chain partners can communicate in social software, these virtual systems, unlike ordinary software, are available online at any time, require little or no training and a trivial amount of computing power from the client. Furthermore, professional social business networks can be formed vertically, from the original supplier all the way through the supply chain till the end customer, or horizontally, overreaching a specific industry, like logistics or a geographical area (FIGURE 3). A hybrid of both is also viable since eligibility depends only on whom the integrator desires to bring together.

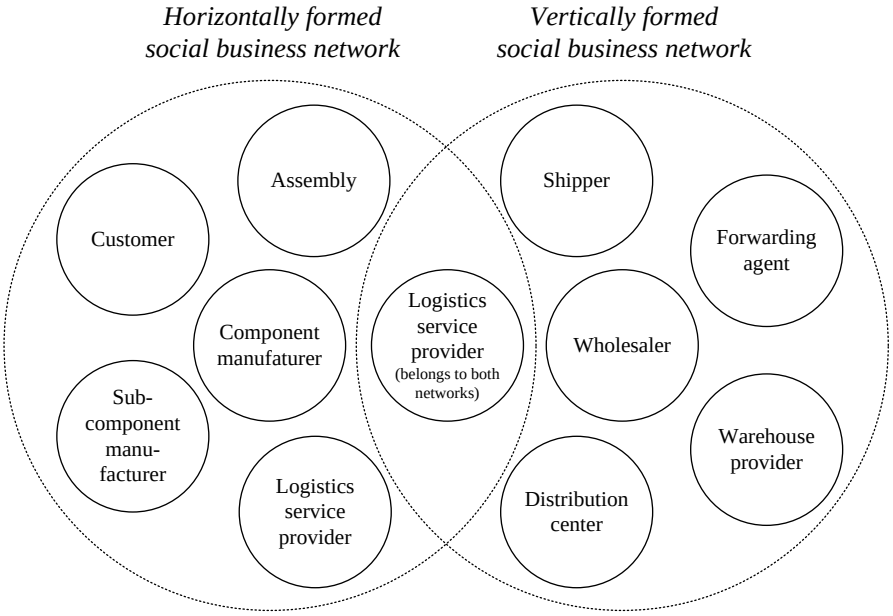


FIGURE 3. Horizontal business network, which, in this case, encompasses a partial supply chain and a vertical business network that represents the sphere of logistics.

In the context of supply chain management, social software can also be viewed as a supplementary communication channel. It does not replace any of the existing communication means but appears a new kind of online environment that is rather different from other conventional methods used in communication between trade partners (TABLE 1).

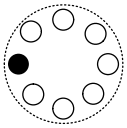
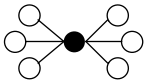
3.5.1.1 Virtual enterprise network

Some real-world examples to unite regional logistics with the help of online community have already been trialed. One model case is a program named Yorkshire Forward Virtual Enterprise Network (VEN), whose aim is to improve the competitive profiles of SMEs in Yorkshire region.

In VEN's case, progress is to be achieved through promoting a collaborative supply chain management – taking supply chains beyond the traditional back-to-back contracting (a logistics process where transactions occur sequentially one after another) as well as brining new possibilities for collaboration. Collaboration was primarily facilitated by an online environment specially designed for this purpose by the regional development agency, Yorkshire Forward.

SMEs in the same industry were encouraged to join the VEN particularly in the event of large projects or deliveries, which would turn out difficult to carry out alone. The underlying assumptions that were meant to be fulfilled through putting up VEN and developing relationships between companies were: resource efficiency, market efficiency, and process efficiency. (Lin & Patterson, 2007)

TABLE 1. Communication characteristics of social software in contrast to other forms of communication in supply chain context

Information exchange system	Common characteristics	Map of exchange direction
Online social software	Collaborative, multifaceted, personal; informal and ongoing dialog; intended for specific interest groups that involve creation of virtual communities.	
Telephone, facsimile, mail, email	Discrete, formal, closed and personal; one-to-one (or one-to-many in case of email) communication.	
Corporate intranet and extranet	Content generation concentrated to one or few administrators; passive, one-way information flow; confined more or less inside the organization; include little or no social traits.	
Enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM), electronic data interface (EDI), and systems alike	A large quantity of repetitious transactions consisting of codes and numbers; restricted structure; highly customized according to specific business needs; necessitate well-established business relationships, but involve no social traits.	

3.5.2 Barriers to social business community

Working in collaboration with other businesses is not entirely secure. Members of virtual business network are exposed to certain risks, which influence their initial decision to join the network. Significance of risks elevate when working in high stake projects together with companies unknown to each other. In their report, Lin & Patterson (2007) describe three major concerns that were expressed by the SMEs; they were: trust, intellectual property right (IPR) and risks.

- Trust enables organization members to share information, and encourages them to be creative in collective projects. Trust is not present if the network consists of companies that are total strangers to each other. So ideally, the network should either comprise of mutually familiar companies or the integrator should strive to create trust between the operators.

- The issue of IPR is who owns the right to the final deliverable that was jointly produced by the member businesses. If members sense a risk of missing out a right to certain outcome, it will have a direct effect in the amount of effort and creativity that the participating members are willing to contribute. To overcome

this concern and assure the members that IPR ownership will be dealt appropriately, there must be a strategy plan for solving possible IPR conflicts.

- As with the issue of IPR, SMEs associate risks, such as financial losses, zero returns, and damaged reputation (in case accompanying members deliver substandard) with joining a virtual enterprise network. Quality matters that may impact individual members and risks in general should be addressed by a risk management plan, which is formulated and overseen by the uniting organization.

In order to develop effective inter-organizational supply chain management, Lin & Patterson (2007) recommend that the network leader should develop *"a robust and non-hostile environment where business associates are able to be familiar and get to know each other and then gradually develop a trust relationship."* They also add in that incentives, such as rewards and terms of conditions, can help companies to work towards a common goal.

3.5.3 Focus on people instead of technology

Besides the aforementioned trust, IPR issue and risks, there is a range of other issues that should be taken into consideration when planning a social business community. Deploying a mere social web service to an organization and waiting for users to come is likely to result in unwished outcome; i.e. the users lack engagement. Implementation therefore should not exclude people from the blueprint.

Companies can deploy social platforms into their work communities trivially. There are plenty of software suppliers to choose from – in fact the number is growing constantly due to low entry barriers of the market. However, a successful implementation of social business network (or online business community) is not simply a result of selecting a right software supplier. Although social media platform plays a central role in the unifying process, it is neither a guarantee of people's engagement nor commitment. In a general view, social software is at most a mechanism that makes operational preconditions possible: it is a platform that enables coordination, collaboration, information sharing, content generation, discussion and so forth in online context.

As brought up earlier, IT companies in particular have been forerunners in implementing social software. Young, tech-savvy employees whose main working tool

is a computer, impose no obstacles for deployment, which in turn lessens the need for preliminary planning and user training. Large, traditional organizations, which expand over a multitude of divisions and functional areas, call for a deployment that is thought-out well, designed according to user needs, communicated properly and matched to the corporate culture – or vice versa – corporate adjusted to match open dialog.

In any event, for the party responsible for planning and designing the online community, it is of uppermost importance to answer why such a system will be taken into use and what it is used for. The answer can be based on a preceding contemplation about whether there is a well-defined need for a social media service and what the need is. Consequently, the result of this reasoning will need to be communicated clearly to the intended user group. Failing to do so, the implementation may firstly backfire in confusion and frustration among employees and secondly lead to a total abandonment of the undertaking.

3.5.4 Framework for social media deployment

Otala & Pöysti (2007) provide a rather inclusive framework for social media software deployment. Their four-phase approach considers both human variables and technological aspects (FIGURE 4). According to the authors, it may be applied in diverse social media implementations, such as corporate blogs, wikis, and other distinct third party services since quite identical phases apply under different social software. With minor modifications, Otala & Pöysti's (2007) framework also extends satisfactorily to online social business networks, particularly for the reason that it considers people as a central part in the process.

Given that a well-defined and factual need has been attained by the design team and the objectives set, the project may proceed to the implementation plan. The items that pertain to this phase and the phases following it are described below and summarized in FIGURE 4.

3.5.4.1 Phase one: Implementation plan

Metering system – a set of indicators should be established to monitor that the system progresses towards previously set objectives. Metered information may be qualitative, such as user feedback or indirect utility for member organizations, or quantitative, such

as number of users or specific transactions, amount of new content etc. Both the success of implementation and results during actual operation should be measured.

Software selection – an account of the software that will be used, including its technological features, integration to existing systems, service and support possibilities, and license type.

Content description – tells what kind of information is expected to come into the online environment and defines requisite seed content (premade content that will be added gradually to create discussion).

Pilot – a preliminary, small scale experiment that gives first-hand feedback of the issues in the system as well as in the implementation method, which help to improve the actual version.

Security protocol – reduces accidental misunderstandings and resolves conflicts. Depending on whether the service is external (such as customers or parallel companies), internal (such as company employees), or a combination of both, security should be organized accordingly. For instance, by setting up guidelines to what type of information can be published.

3.5.4.2 Phase two: Actual implementation

Roles and responsibilities – undefined responsibilities may slow down the use and spread of social software, therefore responsibility areas should be agreed upon. A simple way is, for example, to divide users in three groups: administration, moderation and thought leading.

Communication and training – the more communication the better the awareness. All the users should at least have a clear image of why social software is deployed, what are its objectives, for whom it is intended, where can it be found and how can it be used. In more traditional enterprises, the need for user training may be greater than in others. Sufficient skills may be already acquired by watching a short video clip, which explains the key features and functions of the software. In some cases a more hands-on approach is in place.

Instruction and ground rules (code of conduct and guidelines) – a concise document that consists of the same subjects found in the implementation plan (responsibilities, rationale, etc.) plus a guideline of what is appropriate behavior in the online environment. This document is destined to the end users.

Support persons – in reference to responsibilities, support persons are named so that everyone knows whom to turn to in the event of a problem. If support persons are omitted, a user may get stuck, throw up his hands and stop using the software.

Check prerequisites – During implementation, corporate culture and technological capabilities should be confirmed. Corporate culture should, to an extent, match the characteristics of social media: e.g. encourage open innovation, tacit information sharing, transparency and relatively flat hierarchy. Similarly, it is worth making sure that the employees are prepared with adequate skills and digital literacy as well as with suitable terminals and internet to access the software.

If the environment is intended for business network coordination, collaboration, information sharing across company borders and employee training purposes, as in Logiera's case, there are further inhibitors to consider. Bartlett-Bragg (2009, p.19) divides these in organizational and individual inhibitors. From the organizational perspective, these inhibitors include: possible rich media limitations imposed by IT departments; training culture that is structurally dependent upon competency and regulatory requirements or that focuses overly on measurable return on investment (ROI). From individual's perspective training through social media may be inhibited by: learner's dependency on a trainer for direction; leaner's lack of confidence in publishing and sharing and leaner's personal time management.

3.5.4.3 Phase three: Working in social media environment

Content generation – is the driving force of social media deployment. Without fresh content users lose their interest, the community dies out and the implementation will fail. It is particularly the case in corporate social media endeavors with top-down implementation. However, this is avoidable through building diverse incentives that keep users engaged until sufficient individual activity (critical mass) is attained.

Incentives vary from one interest group to another, (e.g. logisticians prefer different content than what their counter parts in marketing), and hence it is important to probe the user group to find out what exactly is meaningful for them. This accounts to one of the main reasons for conducting a survey in Logiera's case.

Managing the environment – if unmanaged, the social networks are likely not to bring the expected outcomes. "Informal [social] networks tend to inhibit innovation more often than enable it" (Kleinbaum & Tushman, 2008). Managing an online environment involve similar traits than that of ordinary management; organizing tasks, allocating resources, coordinating and supervising the work process, forming (virtual) teams, solving issues, motivating people, assessing results and giving rewards or penalties, respectively.

Although the elements of management remain the same in an online context, the conduct may differ. For example, if someone is to be rewarded, the rewarding criteria derive from virtual achievements or performance and should be rewarded accordingly. In professional online communities, community recognition may be one of the best ways to award a person as that is oftentimes the underlying reason why people engage in online communities. The Linux community is a good example of this. In that hundreds of professionals devote their time for creating a common output on a voluntary basis – sometimes the only reward being recognition from fellow professionals.

3.5.4.4 Phase four: Measure and asses results

Implementation success – accounts for the results derived during the pilot and the preliminary implementation. Users' comments of the features as well as the number of users and amount of content give direction to which the system should be developed towards. Although monitoring goes on non-stop, there should be predetermined monitoring periods with one assigned to the implementation phase.

Operational results – give ground for constant development and fine-tuning meanwhile the online environment is in full use, that being one of the foremost merits of SaaS. Usability can be further developed by respective surveys and feedback.

Influential results – while difficult to measure, influential results are of uppermost importance. They are the ultimate indicators that show whether or not the system has answered its preset requirements and objectives. As mentioned in 3.5.3, social media platform is a means to an end – not the end itself. Hence, the value that it brings to an organization is external and should also be metered externally; e.g. has the work culture or customer satisfaction improved, are there more ideas or innovations than before, have employees' gained new skills, are resources used more efficiently, are there positive changes in the company revenue.

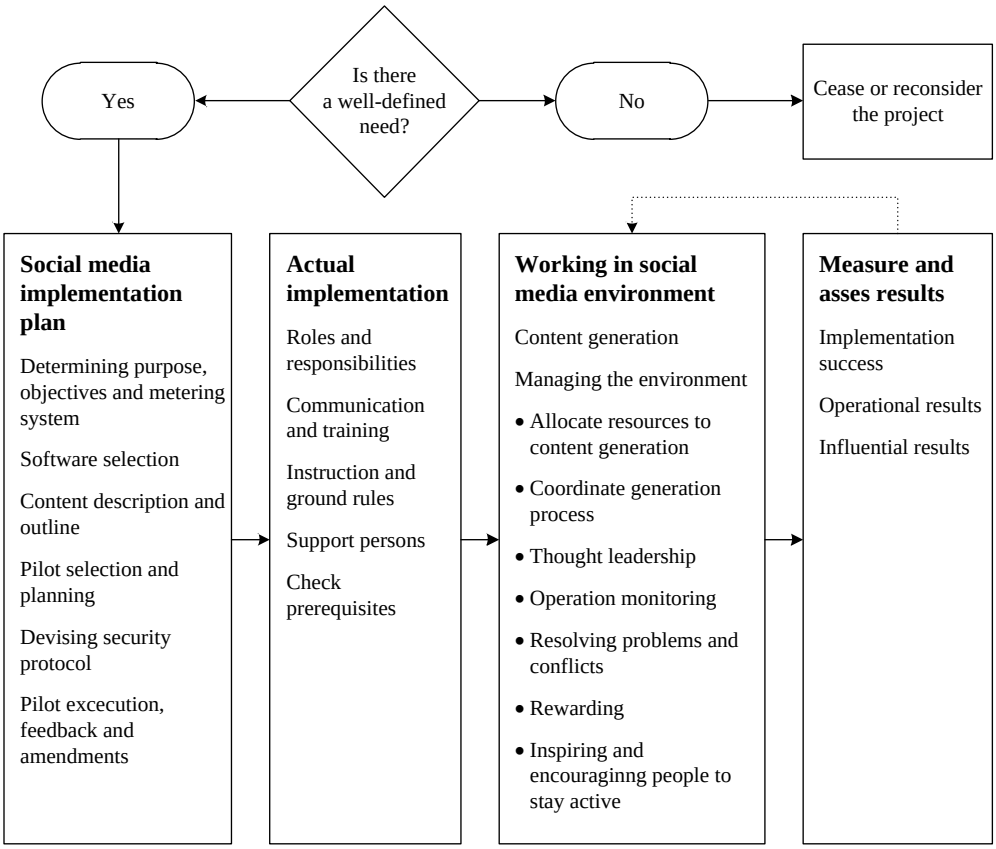


FIGURE 4. Step-by-step implementation plan to social media deployment (modified from original version by Otala & Pöysti, 2007, p. 93)

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Researches involve a number of logical steps, which guide and outline the research work in different phases. Each phase refines the research by an increment to give an outcome that is both reliable and valid. Research design path of this particular work is shown in FIGURE 5. This section explains the theory of those steps in fairly detailed manner, and gives justification for the research methods and data organization approaches used in this work. An account of the interview setup and the background of interviewees are given at the end of the section.

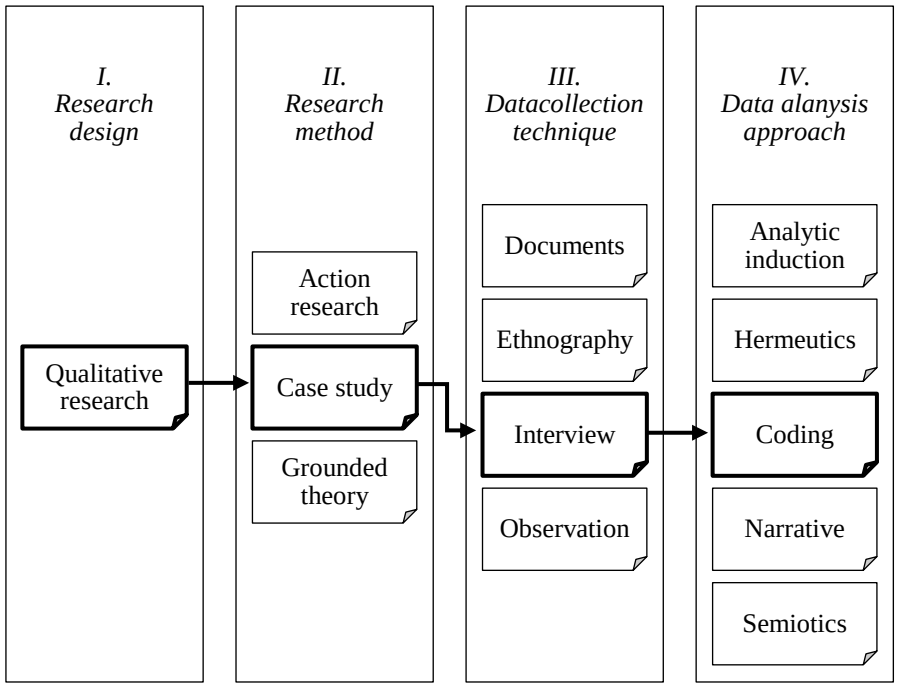


FIGURE 5. The path of qualitative research design as used in this research (the items demonstrate only some of the existing alternatives)

Researches are carried out by following a certain approach or method that distinguishes the essence of the work. Qualitative and quantitative methods are by far the most commonly used ways of classifying the research work. The advantages and disadvantages of the two methods are discussed briefly in the following paragraph.

In direct comparison, these two methods tradeoff between context and the ability to generalize. On one hand, quantitative researches with large sample size and statistical proofing allow generalization to a large population. One the other hand, results

presented in numbers overlook the social and cultural contexts of a subject. Qualitative researches entail opposite merits. While the results are difficult to generalize, they give an in-depth view of the matter. This is particularly helpful if the topic is new and it has caused little or no previous studies.

The topic and research question give an underlying basis for choosing between qualitative and quantitative approaches. A qualitative research seemed the most suitable for this research, considering that the subject of study is relatively new and there is only a small number of existing publications about it. Furthermore, the research question pertains to a specific organization and its issues, which omits a must for generalization.

Besides making a distinction between qualitative and quantitative method, Myers (2009) suggests to determine an underlying philosophical assumption in context with the research design. "All research, whether quantitative or qualitative, is based on some underlying assumptions about what constitutes 'valid' research and which research methods are appropriate," he says. These philosophical assumptions that later influence and guide qualitative research are namely positivist, interpretive and critical (for details, see Myers 2009, p. 35-43). Interpretive perspective the underlying philosophy in this study, and its influence to the work is further explained under research methods.

4.1 Research methods

Myers (2009) defines research method as "a strategy of enquiry, a way of finding empirical data about the world." In other words, they are the methods used to answer the research question. Some of the traditional methods in business management include ethnography, action research, case studies and grounded theory. Before deciding upon a research method, all the respectable research methods should be considered thoroughly against one's personal abilities, the research topic and the underlying problem.

Case study carries a broad definition as being a description of a particular case or situation, which is used to draw some conclusions about the phenomenon more generally (Myers, 2009). Case studies are used to discover the features, factors or issues that are relevant in the topic particularly in exploratory researches. With the aforementioned research philosophy, case study takes a specific form: interpretive case

study. Case studies of this nature attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them.

4.1.1 Primary data

Primary data refers to the sources that are unpublished and gathered directly by the researcher. As opposed to secondary data, which relies on published material, primary data is the type of data that embraces interviews, fieldwork, email and the sources alike. The reason to collect a primary data is to gain an insight of the studied phenomenon. Conducting a primary data collection requires more resources from the researcher, and therefore it is easily regarded as the most time consuming phase in a research. In consequence of the time spent to gather the data, the research becomes distinguishable and gains reliability.

The choice of particular data collection technique depends upon the earlier choice of a research method, research topic, and the availability of data (Myers, 2009). Typical data gathering methods in qualitative studies are interviews, participant observation and documents. Each one can be used separately or as a mix to conduct a case study. The one most commonly used in business management case studies is interview. Interviews allow gathering of rich data from people in various roles and situations. Interviews can be categorized into three basic types as listed in TABLE 2.

TABLE 2. Types of interviews (Myers, 2009)

Structured interviews	The use of pre-formulated questions, strictly regulated with regard to order of the questions, and sometimes regulated with regards to the time available.
Semi-structured interviews	The use of some pre-formulated question, bunt no strict adherence to them. New Questions might emerge during the conversation.
Unstructured interviews	Few if any pre-formulated questions. In effect interviewees have a free rein to say what they want. Often no set time limit.

In this research, the informants were reachable and had pre-consent to give an interview on the matter making it a somewhat rational choice of data collection. Accordingly, a semi-structured interview was conducted on Logiera's business network to collect primary data for this research. The interviewing sheet involved pre-formulated

questions, but further questions emerged as the respondents elaborated their thoughts. Each interview started off by default questions and thus there is some consistency across the interviews. The actual interview sheet is found in Appendix 1.

4.1.2 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis helps to reduce the data or edit the data into manageable and meaningful form, and focus on some or most important aspects of the data (Myers, 2009). There is a multitude of approaches to interpreting qualitative data, each of them serving a specific purpose. The transcripts of tape-recorded conversations that were collected during the interviews would have allowed a conversation analysis since the genuine speeches were available, but in my personal opinion, a detailed analysis of verbal communication would have not brought extra value to this research. The data was more valuable in its content as opposed to its context, hence I considered coding as an appropriate analysis method.

A code can be a word that is used to describe or summarize a sentence, a paragraph, or even a whole piece of text such as an interview (Myers, 2009). Miles & Huberman (1994) suggest that coding is a tag or a label for assigning units of meaning to the information compiled during a study. After the interviews had been conducted the initial themes were identified under each corresponding question, and gradually a concrete structure of related themes emerged. A summary of the themes and the code labels used in primary data analysis are reported in Appendix 2.

4.2 Interview setup

As a means to build confidence in the interviewee and create a trustful relationship, I intended to arrange the interviews face to face whenever possible. Overall, the more comfortable interviewees are, and the more they are prepared to open up and talk, the better the disclosure is likely to be (Myers, 2009).

The interviews took place in the corresponding company's premises, with an exception to one case, where, due to appointment cancellation and physical distance to the company, a phone interview was more appropriate. Each interview was documented by using two methods: recording and note taking. Taping the entire event made it easier to

transcript the responses later exactly as told, while written notes connoted for the nonverbal messages, my own reactions and external information of the company.

4.3 Background information of the interviewees

Between October and November 2010, 11 persons were interviewed from six different companies. These six companies were selected among the 25 members who had been active participants in Logiera's strategy workshops during the latter half of 2010. The partaking businesses represented a wide range of fields such as consultancy firms, IT houses, hardware suppliers, research and education institutions as well as several logistics providers.

For this research, it was necessary to interview only those companies that functioned in the field of logistics, because they were supposed to be the main users of the planned social learning environment. Consequently, the line of business was determined as a classifier and logistics as principal selection criteria. In doing so, all of the logistics operators from the main group were singled out and contacted for an interview. Most of the interviewees were in a decision-making position, held a clear overview of the business, and had a comparatively long work history. Out of the eleven interviewees, eight represented managerial positions, two were ordinary employees and one accounted for an executive.

4.4 Limitations and validity of the results

There was no indication that the respondents would have confined information in the interviews. However, the respondents lacked a profound knowledge of social media and all its possibilities, and so the responses are limited to a certain level of imagination. If a similar survey would be conducted on another, more technology oriented group, the results would probably show a higher diversity of ideas.

The user views, which were discovered through the survey, are applicable only for Logiera's business network. Still, the framework, upon which the actual implementation plan was designed, may very well work for other social media deployment plans as well.

5 INTERVIEW RESULTS OF THE CASE COMPANY

In this part, the results of the in-depth interview are presented, and their potential implications to Logiera's social business cooperation and learning environment reviewed.

To lay out a comprehensible analysis, the eighteen questions are assorted in two main themes, which are work community learning and social media. Community learning culture outlines the employees' readiness to adopt social media tools. Furthermore, employee training, which the interviewed companies provide currently and the training that will become important in the future are discussed in order to find out how social media could be used to improve those training processes.

The chapter also describes how the employees and the managers follow their industry and what affects their learning motivation. The second part examines social media usage among the respondents in general terms and how eager they are as content creators. At the end of the social media usage section, the respondents were asked to contemplate over what features they see important in Logiera's social learning environment.

5.1 Community learning culture

The first theme, work community learning, comprises an array of questions by which the interest groups' willingness to adopt a novel community software. Questions also mapped current training weaknesses and training needs that would possibly rise in the future. Further, the questions entail information and best practice sharing culture as well as specific sources that the respondents followed to keep track of their industry.

5.1.1 Current training

Training in the work community can be divided roughly in two parts based on the responses: training of manages and training of ordinary employees. In addition to these two, a separate inspection is in position for trainings that are subject to license, and which apply both to managerial and non-managerial positions.

5.1.1.1 Training of management

A frequently emphasized subject for those in leadership position concerning training was personnel management. In this case the training provider is a third party organization, e.g. a consultant company. In addition to human skills, managers' training contained several elements that relate to business execution. By business execution, the respondents referred to such operations as accounting, tender calculation, sales, and order handling. Typical for operative trainings was that they were conducted by the company itself or alternatively as a commission in local institutions, such as Tampere Adult Education Centre (TAKK). LOGY Competence Oy, a subsidiary owned by Finnish Association of Purchasing and Logistics provides a variety of logistics related trainings and courses. However, none of the respondents said that they were making use of them.

E-learning or internet based training was nearly non-existent. One interviewee had studied in a virtual environment for her work, but criticized the platform of being too limited. In her mind, *"Distance learning at TAKK, and Internet courses in particular, are of low quality."* She further clarified that the courses lack interaction. In TAKK's case internet was merely used for submitting assignment, not for a collaborative problem solving.

The lack of systematic and continuous approach was an apparent defect in administrative training. Even though the importance of those ongoing training was acknowledged, training did not get under way until the someone realized to ask for it – or in other words when there was an evident need for it. In this case, an acute need may arrive upon hiring a new person, or from managers own suggestion, which highlights the fact that trainings may be unplanned and rather irrational. *"We are trying to keep up continuous training,"* explained the country manager of Freight Frame, but as it turns out, they take place two or three times a year. In my view, expenses were not necessarily the reason for the negligent state – in fact, informants embraced human resource development widely – the shortfall was the initiation. Small and medium sized operators are limited in their personnel and time resources, and managers are required to work under multiple responsibility areas, leaving little room to build a comprehensive human resource development scheme.

5.1.1.2 Training of workers

For a large part, worker training consists of introductory briefing. The informants claimed to have low worker turnover, yet job orientation was the ruling area of training, particularly among the companies with labor-intensive functions (e.g. warehousing and transportation). Evidently, the employers managed work introductions entirely in-house. Depending on the company, the paid or unpaid period varied between one and three weeks, whereupon the company conduct and working methods were disclosed. Here working methods mean the physical execution of work as in pick, pack and dispatch; whereas company conduct refers to supportive issues such as terms of employment, reporting, payment and economical driving style. Several companies gave out folders to their employees to guide them through the work. Little or no digital material was used in introductions or for further development. In addition to the orientation, workers took part in several mandatory trainings for a work-specific license. In my view, the nature of worker training is batch-like and lacks a proactive approach: employees keep to orientations and directive trainings, which is to say trainings take place when the need is obvious.

5.1.1.3 Training subject to license

Work-specific licenses are common in logistics. They exist to ensure safety and correct ways of working. Besides employees, the organizations that provide licenses need to fulfill certain norms to be authorized. In theory, every company could be a license provider, but within the interviewed companies, one had obtained a training permit. In this exceptional case, the business had designed and implemented taxi drivers' training package, which had become compulsory in early 2010. They had applied for the license, and carried on developing the course further. Other companies sent their employees to external companies to get a license, which is a rather customary arrangement.

The responses imply that training is discrete: companies do not cooperate in the procuring process in the way they could. Beyond collaborative online learning, a logistics integrator could unite the companies for collective training and that way lower the expenses through cost sharing.

Another aspect is that, the license courses call for fairly large group sizes in order to commence. If we look at the companies, they hire new workers gradually, not in batches.

Thus, the operator may have to postpone training until the attendance is high enough. In an ideal situation, new employees get the necessary permits as soon as they enter the company, not a month later. SME's are the ones most affected by this, although they need the same licenses as large corporations. I assume that the attendance-rate issue could be tackled with collective trainings that are supported by social-web learning tools. First, Logiera would have to gather up an aggregate training demand of the entire business network. When the attendees hit a sufficient amount, say 20 trainees from all firms combined, the training would start internally, or as delegation in preselected organizations that provide training services. This is a concrete example of how to obtain the "Certified by Logiera" accreditation, which was discussed in Logiera's strategy workshops.

Logiera's work culture comes with a high grade and consistent customer service, which is to be defined later. Given that Logiera has several partners in cooperation and a multifold number of people work under them, it will be a challenge to convey the determined service level to everyone. However, a feature common to each employee regardless of company, is orientation. By bringing physical get-togethers and social media in to the orientations, Logiera could share its way of working and ensure appropriate service level efficiently and effectively across the entire partner network.

Logistics companies authorized to hold courses, such as those that give specific drivers' license or work authorization, are a rarity even though benefits of in-house training are reasonable. A company training its own personnel has autonomy over time, group sizes, expenses, and location, whereas those depending on third party training have little control over the same matters. A higher number and right specialization of authorized trainers, could lead to situation where operators train one another. This change, however, would call for legal knowledge, right management skills, and all the more an expansion to new business area, which may be too much to ask from the partner network.

5.1.2 Future training needs

The informants were asked to tell about the training needs that would become important in the future. The replies intend to help design the content of Logiera's learning environment. Results were comparable based on the area of business. Customer service and vehicle handling were stressed as rising issues in transportation. In warehouse

business, the desirable areas were technical systems, devices and sales. In the forwarding business, industry changes and vocational logistics training will be emphasized. One respondent claimed that the training they provide now corresponds to the future needs.

5.1.2.1 Training prospects in transportation

Transportation will not center only on moving goods (or people) from point A to point B. There is a desire to complement a well-functioning delivery with first-class service.

> *"Customer service is one of the most important focus areas that will be stepped up in the future," Development Manager, Hämeen Tavara Taxi Oy.*

The importance of customer care is highlighted by brief customer contacts: sparse moments for courtesy are either on the phone, at end of the delivery or upon receiving a complaint. The impression may be altered greatly by serving the customer excellently, by giving a default service, or failing to serve at all. Even a few well thought words may boost a positive and helpful image, but one might as well canvass for new customers. One respondent said their chauffeurs dish out business cards before ending a delivery.

Further, in what concerns driver's training, an important aspect was the correct handling of vehicles. The vans, cars and trucks are expected to last throughout their deductible age, while maintenance breaks remain at minimum. Mileage should not correlate with the driver but with the standard consumption and distance driven. Anticipative and vehicle-friendly driving practices are perhaps self-evident standards for carters. However, the training need for economical transport may arise from relatively young and eager workforce and the fact that many of them work as part-time.

5.1.2.2 Training prospects in warehousing

Responses show that further developments generate technical training needs in warehousing. Behind this is an ongoing warehouse optimization process that leans on new device and software improvements.

> *"The logistics industry is becoming increasingly information technology-centered. The bare warehouseman should have a command of computers*

> *and digital readers. Next comes in RFID and devices the like. It's not enough that one can drive a forklift and look at papers…Until now, the warehouse staff has not particularly been trained to use the devices and tools; learning occurs through work." CIO, Logistikas Oy.*

5.1.2.3 Training prospects in administrative work

Upcoming training needs were not as specific in sales, transport planning, personnel management and other areas linked with administration, as they were in warehouse and transportation. The need more in what institution could provide. For example, a vocational diploma of logistics and employee retraining was believed to become important. It seems that characteristics of office work – relatively low employee turnover and long work contracts – support a broader diploma-based trainings better than skill-specific trainings. Concrete needs of administrative staff were for example in delivery terms, which tend to change over time. 2010 was a transition period for the new Incoterms (ICC, 2010). A new a set was introduced – DAF, DES, DEQ and DDU were replaced by DAT and DAP. As such, the following comment addresses an education need for the change.

> *"We have to know what is happening in our business field. Shipping terms change. What other changes are ahead? What is valid information in at the present moment, should we be using DAP after DEQ?" – Logistics Planner, Kuehne + Nagel Ltd.*

Customer service, as a new responsibility, requires coaching. Since service willingness is a question of right attitude rather than routine abilities, the related training should be continuous and value based. In essence good customer service comprises of universal principles shared from business to another. Logiera, as an umbrella operator would be in a good position to take the responsibility of customer service improvement, which otherwise would have to be pursued by individual firms.

Administrative work is in one sense information management, thus a prerequisite for productive work is valid and up-to-date information. Information can be confidential or accessible to the whole industry. At the moment, time may be lost in finding the right information, because it is scattered, and must be looked up from several sources. For

easy reference and unified business practices, Logiera could establish a wiki-based information bank with the help of its business network.

5.1.3 Business practice sharing

In addition to training, interviewees were asked about business and best practice sharing within their work community, and thereby survey functionality and means of internal communications. Responses show an apparent polarization between international and national logistics operators. Interviewed Finnish companies engaged in trade incline to personal communication and guidance, while multinational companies show preference in digital instruments, e.g. telepresence and intranet. Irrespective of region of operation, many of interviewees held weekly face-to-face meetings and systematic documentation of as topmost ways to share best practices and other working methods.

5.1.3.1 National operators

The responses show a relatively low degree of technology utilization within the national operators. At most, technology usage seemed to stand at consideration stage. None of the national operators had introduced, for example, an intranet, but even though practical solutions were not yet apparent, the changeover might happen in the near future, as can be perceived from the following comment.

> *"Text messages work for notifying in general. We also have a TV in the staff room, which runs current news. We have thought about getting our own intranet, some employees support the idea. But the question is, what are the tricks by which we get the employees to use it? For example, by putting work timetables that are now distributed in paper form in there?" – Transportation Manager, Liuttu Logistiikka Oy.*

This can be further understood as the system acquisition not being the issue – intranet could be bought at any time. The issue is how to engage employees to use it. It is not satisfactory if some of the workers are for, but some against it.

SMEs with flat hierarchy are not facing an acute shift to digital communication as face-to-face communication works well. If best practices cannot spread through taking, there is still the quality manual.

> *"We use a quality manual, and write down a considerable amount of documentation. New insights are forwarded to the initiative committee. Best ideas are awarded and taken into use," – Transport Manager, Liuttu Logistiikka Oy.*

5.1.3.2 International operators

Three of the interviewees worked under a company that had operations in several countries besides Finland. In those cases, headquarters and branch offices together form a hierarchy according to which the communication means were formed. For example, weekly meetings were not bound around one table, because the presence of central administration was also needed. As the country manager of Freight Frame Ltd. plainly phrased it,

> *"We are a piece of Holland in Tampere and keep in touch [with the head office] daily through Internet."*

The international companies used intranet as a one-way information channel similar to a digital bulletin board. The content is internally created and focuses on organizational news, notes and changes, but assumedly less attention is given to external events that concern the industry, not to even mention local movements. The possibilities that an intranet can offer as a tool for interaction were not markedly exploited. However, training through intranet was taken into use at Kuehne + Nagel Ltd. according to their logistics planner,

> *"We have departments around the world, and global notes can be followed from the intranet. Sometimes we have had courses in the intra, for example about restraint of competition etc. Everybody gets an invitation to the Internet course and a certificate when it is over. Direct discussion between different countries does not really occur, but to some degree, information is exchanged across the borders. Our operations are so far spread that cultural gaps have become too wide, and therefore best-practice sharing would not be feasible. That is why content [of the intranet] is on general level,"*

5.1.3.3 Further considerations

Communication culture in the interviewed companies suggests that weekly meetings label the best practice sharing at the moment. Intranets are not yet utilized by the SMEs but the pressure to invest in one is growing all the time. On the other hand, logistics operators even now have to deal with enterprise resource planning, personnel management and payroll software, which in the worst case are all in separate systems. When considering intranet on top of these, the key feature is compatibility.

As for Logiera, there are two issues worth considering. One, how will the businesses react when Logiera introduces yet another distinct system into the network? Almost certainly, businesses will not dispense their existing systems, because of the money invested. Neither will they be so eager to accept a system that is incompatible with the standing arrangement. The second issue is a more positive one. Before each logistics partner invests in an own intranet, it is in place to consider whether Logiera could help the businesses by providing a flexible and economical solution for that purpose.

5.1.4 Learning from the industry

The final part of the community learning culture brought forth the channels and the sources that the respondents use to follow their industry. These results can be used when designing the user inducements for Logiera's social learning environment. Despite the diversity, responses can be classified into five categories, namely print media, social interaction, Internet, events and associational activity.

TABLE 3 describes these categories in detail.

Out of the sources used, print media was the most common. Frequently mentioned pieces under that column were LOGY Ry's monthly magazine, Logistiikkalehti, and daily newspapers. Presumably, opinions and outlooks about the industry are for a considerable part formed through reading.

TABLE 3. Industry following channels categorized (the items respondents were able specify are in brackets)

Print media	*Social interaction*	*Internet*	*Events*
Local newspapers (Aamulehti)	Active collaboration with other businesses	Company web sites	Educational events
Monthyl and weekly magazines (Logistiikkalehti, Talouselämä, Tekniikka & Talous, Kauppalehti)	Customers	Field-specific forums (TaksiFoorumi.fi)	Exhibitions (as visitor or /exhibitor)
Foreign magazines	Visitors	Mailing lists (Transport Intelligence)	Seminars
Other logistics magazines and literature	Colleagues		
	Friend network		
	Internal expert group		
	Associational activity (LOGY Ry, Kauppakamari)		

Besides reading, human contacts shape the overall picture of the field. Those items are shown in the social interaction column. Respondents did not emphasize any item specifically, but pointed out the group's value as a whole. The importance of social interaction in comparison to the other three categories is privacy. Anyone can read magazines, browse the Internet, visit events or take part in associations, but the messages absorbed from the colleagues or friend network are only known to the parties involved. This socially situated information can help in noticing emerging issues and taking anticipatory measures. Logiera's approach in this respect should be to encourage its members to bring the elements of social interaction onto its social learning and information sharing environment.

There is no apparent channel to read about regional logistics news. A single web page of a company presents a fraction of all the events that take place in the area, which makes it difficult to see the general picture. Conversely, logistics magazines, like the one published by LOGY Ry, report primarily on a national scale and overlook less important regional dealings. Local newspapers write relevantly about the area but give little attention to logistics field. Financial Manager at Liuttu Logistiikka Ltd. admitted that

> *"...we could follow the industry much more and share own information but a different matter is do we have enough resources for it."*

His comment underlies the actual fact that, given the multitude of information sources, it takes a considerable amount of time to monitor the industry thoroughly. The issue can be illustrated through a simple question: how much time would it take to dig up all the warehousing related news from Western Finland published during the last two months? Information sources in this respect are very scattered, making it virtually impossible to accomplish such a news enquiry. An attempt to do it seem already like a waste of time.

This issue can be overcome by bringing regional news in to a single channel, and Logiera would be in good position to do it. It is not worthwhile for Logiera to sew the information together manually, much less to produce it. Instead, with the help of automated web technology, Logiera could delegate this task to companies in its business network. In theory the solution is similar to a give and take principle: by sharing your own news feed you gain access to an industry wide feed. Logiera's responsibility is to manage the information feeds so that they provide maximal value to each business in the network. This feature is described in detail later in 5.2.4.1

5.1.5 Learning motivation

Employees' willingness to learn and assimilate new situations was assessed to detect potential hindrances, which the learning environment could encounter. Desire for knowledge and self-development, or the lack of it, can significantly influence the use of such a web-learning system as Logiera intends to put forth, particularly when bearing in mind that involvement is voluntary.

The respondents were asked to consider learning motivation on their own behalf and on workers' behalf. Assumed influencers were age and status. Managers are assumed to be up to date of their industry and have an aim for ongoing self-development, firstly for their own interest and secondly for improved decision-making. Sales manager at Logistikas Oy pointed out that the difference between work and free time is diluted – for manager it is only natural to follow the industry movements.

In some cases proactive attitude extends to non-managerial positions as well. There are workers with a determined mind, clear objectives of their career and consequent initiative to demand further training. However, such target-oriented workers are not yet a majority. The actual motive is compensation, but it is not the only motive. In present-

day work society the additional motivators are, for example, the working community and the possibility to make use of one's own abilities.

Financial Director of Liuttu Logistiikka Ltd. explained about their workers' training motivation. Attitudes change from side to side, but in the end, it is rather difficult to expect spontaneous self-development from the workers side, particularly if they should do it on free time.

> *"There are always those who say, 'Do we get paid, and do we have to do this?' but equally there are those who wish for extra training,"*

CIO of Logistikas Ltd. seized that wariness or fatigue happens by time and is correlated to aging. In a routine-like work, tasks can be performed with one's eyes shut when they are learned but if those tasks are altered, performing them even with one's eyes open will prove difficult.

> *"A weary warehouseman does not have the energy to study in the internet. A person who is young and interested about developing himself would surely go for it."*

The Development Manager at Hämeen Tavara Taxi Oy had a contrasting view, however. He did not see aging or weariness as an issue for learning but as a source of motivation.

> *"I was positively surprised when we introduced a new enterprise resource planning system. At the same time as software changed, we got new technology, and the senior employees were among first to check out these new devices and programs. I think that new solutions enliven those who have got bored in their routines in a positive way,"*

5.1.5.1 Further considerations

Managers are ought to have a basic motivation for the service, since industry monitoring, and lifelong learning is their responsibility, regardless of responsibility area or duties. Seemingly, age affects learning motivation in varying degrees. Managers believe that young employees have a positive attitude and receive work changes with ease while the learning motivation of senior employees met skepticism. The two conflicting views

above indicate that weariness may not be an obstacle for Logiera's web environment – it may even turn out a source for motivation, if addressed appropriately.

Given the general understanding that younger employees have the edge over senior employees when it comes to using modern information technology, it can be expected that they are first to get familiar with Logiera's social web service. For this reason, Logiera could consider a scheme in which each member of the business network appoints a person among the employees to facilitate Logiera.

The preferably young, eager and tech-savvy facilitator would communicate the benefits of the social business network to the rest of the staff, give momentum for it, guide in its use and work as a linkage between Logiera and the associated business. Besides these intra-company activities, he would have regular council meetings with other facilitators from the business network to socialize, share ideas and discuss challenges that they face. In any event, sense of ownership and deeper involvement – both of which benefit the implementation – would be achieved by shifting part of the responsibility to the business network.

5.2 Questions pertaining to social media

In the social media section, the familiarity of existing social media services, usage frequency and application in business context is assessed. In addition, the obstacles in using social media services are addressed at a general level and from Logiera's perspective. The platform content and features, which the interviewees believed important are presented finally. This section provides a current picture of social media's degree of penetration in the business network. Furthermore, the presented information proposes concrete building blocks for the social business network and assists in related decisions.

5.2.1 Use of social media in general

Scheinin et. al. (2009) suggests that, "when designing communication training it is important to investigate whether any social web platforms are used by the personnel and which of these fit in with the corporate way of business thinking, or which of these have added value for the organization." This is based on the observation by Toivonen (2007) that end-user applications come first and professional applications second.

Accordingly, the first question pertained to respondents' personal involvement in social media. A simple chart of questions, which listed the main categories of social media services was used for this purpose. The question set was made concise and easy to grasp by classifying the services into few groups instead of enumerating every social media service out there.

The grounding work of Kaplan & Haenlein (2009, 59-68) in social media was instrumental in giving a classification principle for various services that exist in the Internet. In their work, the seven identified categories to which all social media services fall are: collaborative projects, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual worlds and virtual game worlds. The latter was considered irrelevant for the study but the first six were included. Upon every item, the respondent estimated his or her engagement according to a time scale. In case the category or any of the services under it were not recognized or known but not used, the respondent chose "haven't used or never heard".

As a remark when viewing FIGURE 6, it is important to note the small sample size. Out of the 14 logistics companies that took part in Logiera's strategy workshops on the latter half of 2010, 6 were interviewed for this research giving a coverage percentage of 43 %. It is plain fact that 11 respondents from those companies are insufficient to describe Logiera's business network to the full, let alone the regional logistics industry of Pirkanmaa. For this reason, any conclusions or decisions made under the basis of FIGURE 6 should not be considered as definite but as indicative at most.

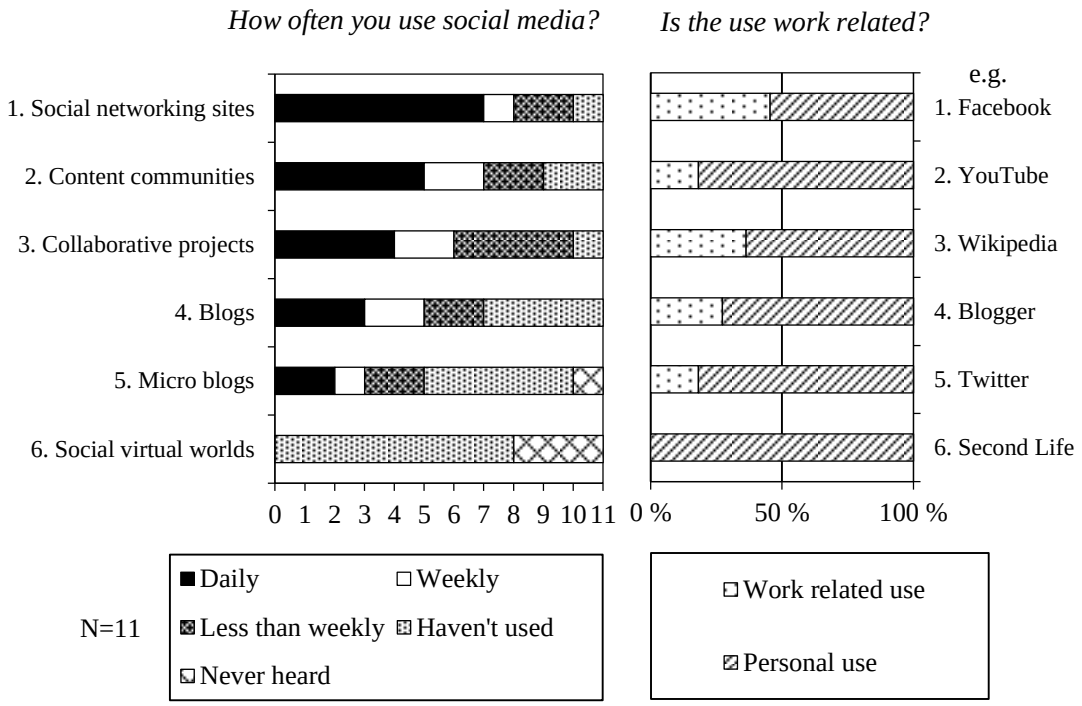


FIGURE 6. Use of social media services in general on the left and as working tool on the right (same axis labels apply to both sides)

Results (FIGURE 6, left) point out services with whom the respondents are familiar or less familiar with. In brief, the figure suggests following:

- Every respondent has used one or more social media services at least once.
- Most of the respondents are members of one or more social media services.
- Social networking sites, i.e. LinkedIn and Facebook, were among the most commonly used services. Seven out of eleven interviewees said to use them daily. In the same category, three respondents used the related services weekly or monthly. The remaining one respondent was aware but had never registered or used social networking sites.
- Second most popular category was content communities, i.e. YouTube, Viemo, Flickr.
- The third position was held by collaborative projects, i.e. the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, and the social bookmarking web service Delicious.

- Collaborative projects had an equal number of users as social networking sites – the only difference was that the frequency of use spread to a longer time span.

- Slightly less than half of the respondents had used micro blogs at some rate, but their use was relatively scarce.

- No one proved to be a user of the final category, social virtual worlds. Some of the respondents did not even recognize the group. The low popularity of social virtual worlds was foreseeable, but I resolved to keep the category as a point of reference to the other categories.

5.2.1.1 Content generation potential

There are several ways to classify users of social media in regards to what degree they engage in its use. A basic example is a three-level approach. At the first level, participation is passive; users follow different media by reading, watching and listening but do not necessarily engage in content creation. Users in second level, in addition to following, respond to existing material and thus engage in process of reactive content generation. Users at third level follow and interact but also generate fresh content to a social media service. A leveling of this kind might suggest that users in the lower-end spend significantly less time in social media than users in the high-end. However, my assumption is that users in each level (followers, reactors and creators) may very well spend close to equal amount of time in social media by only being engaged with different activities.

Out of the respondents, 63 % associated with participatory level one, 27 % with level two and remaining 10 % with level three. On one hand, these percentages may appear weak and insufficient in terms of generating content since nearly third of the users are fall into passive category. If, however, the division is put side by side with Nielsen's (2006) Rule for Participation Inequality, also known as the 90-9-1 or the 1%-rule, the figures look fairly optimistic. According to the rule,

- "90% of users are lurkers (i.e., read or observe, but don't contribute).

- 9% of users contribute from time to time, but other priorities dominate their time.

- 1% of users participate a lot and account for most contributions: it can seem as if they don't have lives because they often post just minutes after whatever event they're commenting on occurs.” Nielsen (2006).

Obviously 63-27-10 division is more desirable than 90-9-1 division as there are more active participants. Yet, although consultants have a tendency to use the participation inequality rule in their presentations, its validness has been refuted. Wu (2010) studied the matter statistically with 200 communities and arrived to a conclusion that the rule is not factual. His non-academic study indicates that the proportions vary greatly with relation to how the “most contributions” by 1 % is defined. Presuming a condition where the rule would hold true, “most contributions” would be equivalent to 30 % of overall inputs. However, 30 % is difficult to perceive as most contributions in the literal meaning of the word.

Regardless of the fact that the Rule for Participation Inequality is not entirely tenable, it works as a rule of thumb that reflects how skewed participation can be. When decision-makers pay attention to this they can draw anticipatory measures as in “How to activate the lurkers?”

Skewedness was highlighted by responses to a follow-up question pertaining to whether the respondent wrote blogs, wikis or anything the like, and what was the reason if he did not do so. All but one interviewee replied to this question negatively signaling to the fact that creating new content is marginal. Lack of time at work and lack of interest on free time were the two outstanding justifications and come out plain from the two comments below. In this respect other respondents gave analogous reasons.

> *“I don’t [create content], and I wouldn’t even wish to. Days are full and in the evening I’m with two children,” – Logistics Planner, Kuehne + Nagel Ltd.*

> *“I hate Nokia’s cellphones, and all sort of devices. I have a barrier for that [content creation]. Besides, in my free time I don’t like to use computers.” – Country Director, Freight Frame Oy.*

Internet entrepreneur Mayfield (2006) presents another example of user classification by degree of participation. The important point he makes in this example named Power Law of Participation is that at every level of engagement, no matter whether the user is

a reader, a leader or anything in between, his or her engagement provides intelligence to the community. At the lower-end, which represents a vast majority of users, the intelligence generated is collective, whereas at the higher-end the intelligence generated is collaborative (FIGURE 7).

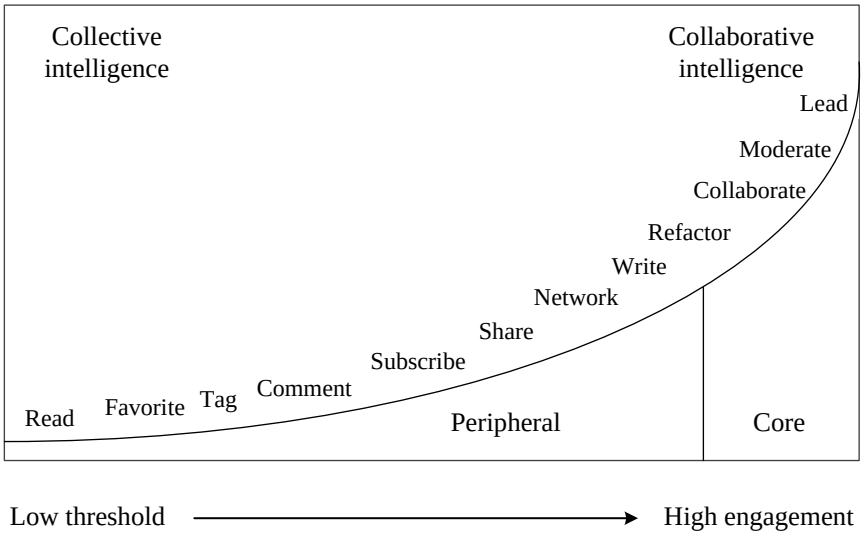


FIGURE 7. Power Law of Participation (Mayfield, 2006)

5.2.1.2 Work related use of social media

The services of social media can be employed for business uses in various ways as explained earlier in 3.4. There was a degree of utilization among the respondents but overall the use of social media in business transactions was somewhat low (FIGURE 6, right).

Again social networking sites were at the top; nearly half of the interviewees used those in relation with their work. An evident reason for such a high application at work is the possibility to network with other business associates. For example finding new clients or partners can be easier and more efficient through a businesses dedicated social media site than a phonebook. Another reason is the speed with which information disseminates in social network sites. A comment made on this by the Transportation Manager of Liuttu Logistiikka Oy gives a practical example of how they use social media at work.

> *"The status updates in Facebook tell about sick drivers before he or she has even noted the office. We have plenty of time to react in advance and make the necessary arrangements in the shift."*

While in private (FIGURE 6, left) the second most used category was content communities, at work the second position was taken by collaborative projects. 36 % used them in relation to their work. Content communities, i.e. Wikipedia and Delicious, were handy in checking and searching fact based information quickly. It is noteworthy that even though the category entails a number of web services the respondents may have only recognized Wikipedia in this context as it oftentimes appears first when making a query in search engine.

Corporate blogs have become increasingly common during the past decade. In these interactive web boards companies expose their operations to common people and other associates. The target group and message purpose of blog posts differ from those of official publications in degree of formality and content. The essence of blogs is two-way interaction; readers have a possibility to participate in blog dialogue and that way refine the conversation. However, among the companies represented in this interview, the use of blogs was not apparent. In fact, none of them had launched a company blog. Yet, blogs were the third most popular category in work related use of social media (FIGURE 6, right). The reason behind this is that blogs were used to follow and accumulate information not to generate content actively.

Private use of social media is notably more widespread than work related use but there are signs of growing awareness about how social media could help actual business activities.

5.2.2 Conception of Logiera's social business networking service

The final three questions in the social media section drilled deeper down into the upcoming social media environment. Firstly respondents' attitude towards networking and information sharing via Internet was evaluated, and secondly, closely linked to that, the advantages and disadvantages of such system were questioned. Finally respondents were asked to think of concrete features and content that would support their business.

5.2.2.1 Networking through Internet

Meeting business correspondents and learning through social business network based solutions was perceived positively as a whole. Out of the interviewees nearly everyone saw it as a concept that would develop the industry. Here are some of the comments made to support the use of such a system:

> *"Transparency of information is for everyone's benefit." – CEO of Seulo Palvelut Oy.*
>
> *"The idea is logical. At this moment, if your own resources fall short, there is some degree of co-operation, however not though social media." – Financial Manager of Liuttu Logistiikka Oy.*
>
> *"Brings a new channel for following businesses." – delivery person at Hämeen Tavara Taxi Oy.*
>
> *"…No problems or bad sides at all. Quite the contrary! Networking and getting to know new people is beneficial." – Sales Manager at Logistikas Oy.*
>
> *"We meet both clients and competitors in all kinds of seminars and exhibitions. And even if we sometimes compete for the same matters, we often co-operate." – Country Director at Freight Frame Oy.*

From these comments, sharing information with other operators did not seem as alarming as it later revealed to be when asked the threats and/or disadvantages. There are signs of need for deeper collaboration and web-based dialogue between operators. Nonetheless, the following two comments underline that the value of real-life interaction should not be underrated against social communication in the web-sphere.

> *"…Networking is crucial but in that I prefer face-to-face meetings." – Transportation Planner at Freight Frame Oy*
>
> *"Significant issues will not be decided in there [Logiera's social network], but yes it is a certain type of communication – remembering other's existence and so forth. Much better way is to meet the person directly. Web community may work for keeping up and strengthening relationships." – Logistics Planner at Kuehne + Nagel Ltd.*

Looking at the mid-ground of these comments, conceivably a social web service is at its best when it supports existing relationships within the community that have been formed beforehand in the real world. Same applies to a social learning platform: sense of belonging to a learning community is first built by physical interaction and later transferred in to a social web environment.

5.2.3 Advantages and disadvantages

Perceived advantages and disadvantages of industry wide social media solution are listed in Appendix 3. Evidently the advantages culminate in intensified information exchange, and the disadvantages in misuse of the information and in incapability and/or lack of resources of keeping up the community.

5.2.3.1 Advantages

Under the advantages column, information exchange contains information searching, industry monitoring and networking, which will translate to financial benefits if correctly addressed. Besides information exchange, there were some noteworthy remarks. CEO of Seulo Palvelut Oy reflected that a web community would be a natural way to connect the operators in cooperation,

> *"...Using information services, as you described, seems to be a rational way to link together as a one family in the field of logistics."*

Another comment made by the Financial Manager of Liuttu Logistiikka Oy was that, if the operator, for some reason, would not be able to fulfill customers' requests completely, the service could be still offered by seeking a partner from Logiera's business network.

> *"Members are able to network [Through Logiera's business network] in such way that they find partners if they don't have a business that is included in their strategy but they still want to offer the service to a client."*

Above comment touches closely logistics companies' desire to eliminate over-capacity, a topic that was highlighted in Logiera's strategy workshops earlier. Over-capacity in logistics occurs when a company maintains a higher range of transportation methods

than actually its core business would demand. Companies do this in order to maintain a high service level or, in other words, to offer its clients a complete service.

Over-capacity elimination consequently means that the company cuts down its fleet and focuses only on providing specific services. The flip side in this approach is that, with the lower service level, the company may lose some of its deals. Logiera might be able to provide a solution to the issue by creating a platform that enables capacity sharing between logistics operators. For example, a company that normally operates in parcel deliveries could borrow a lorry from trucking company and vice versa. As a consequence, both operators would not have to maintain over-capacity. A potential device for communicating about these types of capacity-sharing exchanges could be through the social media environment.

5.2.3.2 Disadvantages

Comments made on the threats, disadvantages or concerns of Logiera's social learning and networking service were the continuity of the web-community, maintenance of information and reliability of information. Following comments were highlighted from Appendix 3:

- *Maintenance*. *"Whose responsibility it is to assure that the information is up to date?"* This probably concerned the respondent as she had wished for a logistics information bank that would hold relevant and detailed guidelines of logistics business conduct. As social media promotes user generated content and low governance, in this situation the common users are the editors, and therefore responsible for having latest information at hand.

- *Information management.* In relation to the previous bullet, respondents were concerned about *"How to organize information? What is relevant information and what is not"* – Logistics Planner, Kuehne + Nagel Ltd. This is an imperative question especially if the information volumes grow exponentially as expected in an ideal scenario. Every user should be able to access information that is relevant to the area or line of business, which brings a need for highly customizable web-searches.

- *Information scantiness.* An opposite risk to managing an abundance of information is not having it at all. *"At the initial stage there will be no material or visitors, and the service doesn't get any leverage. The environment will be a kind of torso."* – Sales Manager, Logistikas Oy. This type of situation could conceivably happen in the worst case.

Information scantiness is a real issue that needs a solution. The risk is especially potential when taking into account the small number of operators in the field who would join the network initially. Preventive measure is to upload content (seed content) into the platform beforehand and continue to bring more content in drops (feed content) when the service is up and running.

Seed content helps users to realize the available tools and their usage, thus enabling them to build upon the existing content. Content feeding in the future will keep the users and the community engaged over time. The obverse is that creating seed and feed content will yield perpetual expenses. The longer the community is artificially nurtured the more it will generate costs. It is unrealistic to suppose that the community stands forever. In case the objective is to form a permanent community, mere content feeding will not work to sustain it. Eventually the vendor, Logiera, runs out of resources or the users lose their interest in formulaic content. Either way, the community will collapse. Consequently, central questions to ask are,

- What is the life span of Logiera's business community, and what are the expected costs from that entire time?

- How long are we willing to nurture the community artificially, and what measures can we take to create a self-sustaining community?

At any rate, the community should be active and alive from the very beginning, and that its vitality is based on the active nature of its members – not on artificial nurturing. Therefore, rational content feeding should be complemented by a range of stimulating features and well thought methods. When these are contrived, the main challenge, as addressed by Logistics Planner at Kuehne + Nagel Ltd. can be tackled*:*

> *"Time is a resource that people don't have. First comes one's own work, which we tend to have quite a lot; is there enough time for this?"*

Majority of the respondents told directly or indirectly that the lack of time, if anything, would prevent the use of Logiera's social media service, not to even mention producing content to it. Work tasks are prioritized in the order of importance. Critical tasks come first and insignificant tasks later. The level to which Logiera's social environment rates on every employee's priority scale depends logically on the value it provides. In this, features and content play a key role in offering value to every user.

5.2.4 Features and content

The final question of the entire interview pertained to features and content of Logiera's social business network environment. Interviewees were asked to consider the question from the viewpoint of their own business. Responses are therefore concrete content and feature suggestions, which the operators perceived useful. These submissions are the building blocks of social media service.

Given the abstract and open nature of the question, this part proved as the most challenging part of the entire interview. Respondents had to imagine an intangible service that does not exist yet with small amount of background information. Creative thinking and free flow of ideas was further impeded by the lack of reference point; social media as a social business community tool is a distant concept among small and medium sized logistics operators.

Assumedly, ideas were largely founded on respondents' previous social media experiences, which they have seen and used in the consumer sector. Appendix 4 lists all the feature and content proposals as said. Same items are presented concisely in FIGURE 9 according to the estimated execution time and affiliation dependence, i.e. is execution member or technology dependent.

Information sharing, the aforementioned benefit, reappeared in the suggested features. Two of the most wanted features were news resources and networking possibility. News resources came in two forms: news generated within the business network and news generated outside it.

Available in mass media, external news refer to logistics industry in general whereas internal news refer to announcements published by companies within Logiera's business

network. The distinction between these two news sources brings extra value to all members who join the network.

5.2.4.1 Core feature: internal news feed

The internal news feed feature was drafted and seen advantageous during an interview with the Sales Manager of Logisitikas Oy. In essence, the idea is that companies link their existing news feeds to Logiera's social media service by means of web content syndication. Benefits that come with this feature are better visibility for the company, improved regional news coverage, and a possibility to react to the news in business-oriented context. The basic assumptions that raise demand for the feature are more specifically:

- *Higher visibility.* Every logistics operator and client has a company web page and among other information, most of the web pages contain a regularly updated news section. Both the implementation and operation are paid in time and money. However, despite the effort, a fact presented by internet statistics is that the sites do not attract many visitors; hence, company visibility is not as high as hoped. Small and medium sized businesses are generally hard to follow and their dealings do not make it over the news threshold. Through Logiera's well-aimed channel for disseminating news, companies can gain higher coverage of their new products and services as well as latest dealings and events.

- *To-the-point news intelligence.* Business-critical information comes in many forms as described in 5.1.4, yet there is no accurate channel for local or regional logistics related news – those pieces of information are scattered over a wide sphere of businesses and skimming through them one by one is a wasteful task.

  What is more, logistics magazines – whether national or international – discuss topics that have little relevance to the region and its businesses. Take for instance the renowned magazine Logistiikkalehti from LOGY Ry; its articles vary anywhere from container traffic at the Port of Shanghai to latest side loaders in the market. That is to say, the magazine carries only little relevant information on a regional level. Local newspapers provide an alternative option. They do cover regionally relevant topics but of course, those continuous publications concentrate on the mainstream, not on logisticians. In other words,

there is no such thing as regional logistics news channel. By accumulating regional logistics news to one overarching service, Logiera forms business information resource that offers a good overview of the most relevant topics in the industry as well as specifically tailored news for particular needs.

- *Prospect to interact and react.* When these news feeds become available in Logiera's social media environment they are no longer static articles – by design they contain web 2.0 elements that enable user interaction. I.e. news feeds are open for different forms of participation such as commenting, rating and the like (for more levels of participation, see FIGURE 7 on p. 55).

A practical example of how internal news feeds could be implemented is illustrated in FIGURE 8. The process involves certain steps, which are as follows.

1. Logistics operator ABC Ltd. registers to Logiera's social business network by entering its details to the service. Among others, the details include line of business, geographic location, contact details and most importantly the news feed hyperlink.

2. News feed hyperlink will be used to create a linkage between the news section of ABC Ltd. and Logiera's social business network service.

3. From now on, each time a new article is posted on ABC Ltd.'s website it will be automatically drawn to Logiera's service and embedded with metadata from the corresponding member account. Metadata or information that describes information may hold in e.g. geographical location, line of business, time stamp and keywords of the feed subject.

4. Same process recurs throughout the entire business network so that feeds from every member company accumulate in Logiera's social news service. Understandably, the more businesses involved the higher the provided value will be.

5. The user at ABC Ltd. now wants to read news from the service. Instead of contenting oneself with random glancing, the user can sort and search for news of specific interest; e.g. in the following way: display all happenings of warehousing companies in Pirkanmaa region between January and February 2011.

6. Search results show up accordingly and the service has embedded them with interactive features common to web 2.0; e.g. commenting, rating, liking and sharing.

7. In case the displayed news contain business critical information, embedded features allow ABC Ltd. to react timely and convert the benefits into monetary value.

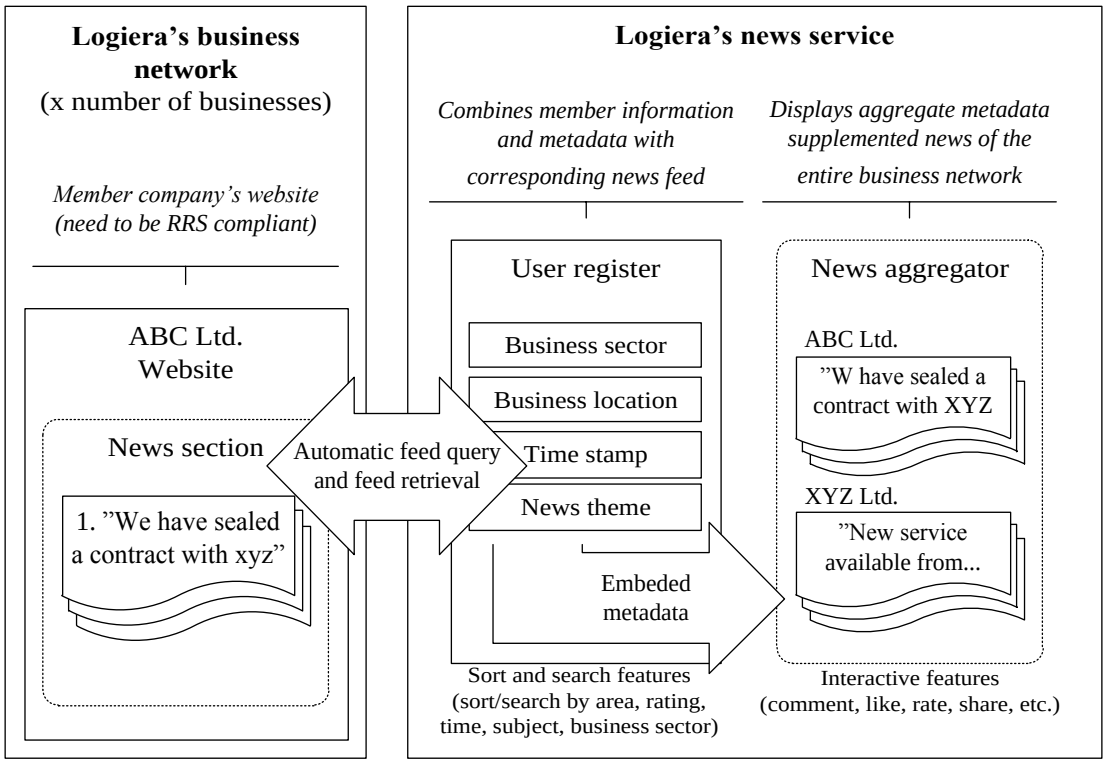


FIGURE 8. An example of aggregating news feeds from the business network

5.2.4.2 Auxiliary features

Besides news aggregation the respondents presented a range of other features that they saw important. Those that were worth special notion are described in the following. Further down, the features are concluded as to which are the "low hanging fruits" in FIGURE 9.

- In order to create an innovation space that is both transparent and diverse, the respondents perceived that the service should be open for everybody. However, there would be predetermined credentials that allow access to different areas within the service and display different user views. E.g. the members of the business network have access to core features and functions

(create/modify/react/read) while external users are permitted to peripheral features and functions (react/read).

- To make the usage personal and create a sense of community there should be at least two profiles: a company profile and an individual profile.

- User interface should be light enough to run smoothly with current technology and devices like smart phones. In addition, it should be compatible with existing data systems.

- Membership and registration should be free for both companies and private users. What is lost in subscription returns is gained in user count and in forming an active community. Instead of running the social business network with service or subscription fees, it could work as a portal through which operators and clients tap into Logiera's core services.

- Relatively quickly and with simple technology, the service can bring together the labor market and companies. The ordinary recruiting process is not flexible enough to employ, for example, warehouse workers. An informal recruitment channel could be a match with the situation, since work is often seasonal in nature, employer needs vary a lot, and they do not have the resources to report in traditional media. Likewise, the service would work as a meeting place for students and companies, allowing operators to announce thesis work and internship positions.

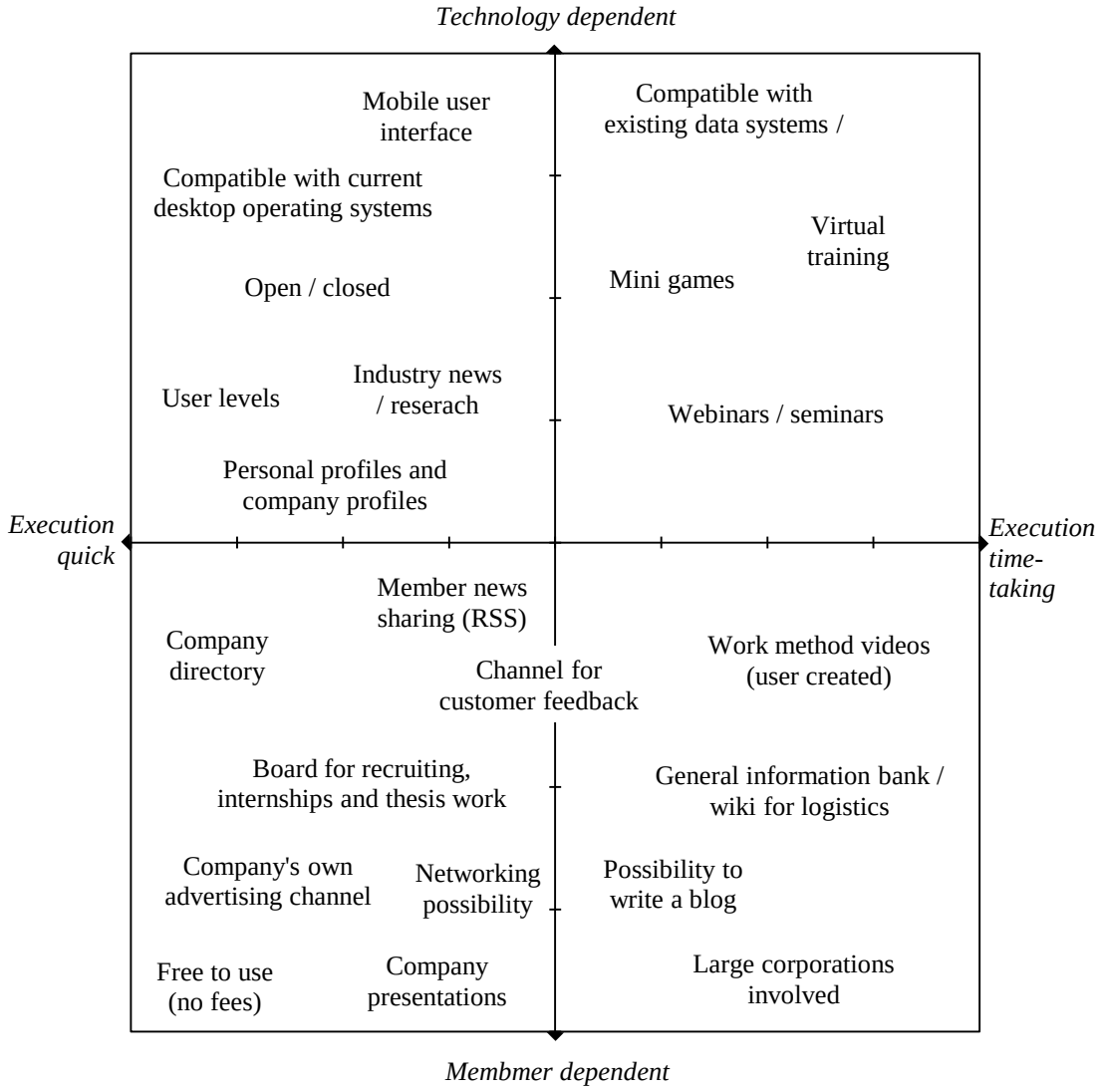


FIGURE 9. Feature and content proposals of social business network service plotted according to whether the item is technology or member dependent and how much time will its execution take. The items plotted on the left side are the so-called “low hanging fruits”.

6 CONCLUSION AND FURTHER DISCUSSION

This thesis brought together a practicable answer to how can Logiera, the research commissioner, utilize social media in uniting local logistics service providers and thereby open new possibilities for cooperation, collective development and training.

Logiera is a regional logistics integrator meaning that it operates through a network of logistics service providers. The core of its business is to provide modular logistics management tools based on the software as a service concept. In other words its business is to manage information flows and in doing so create cost-effective and sustainable logistics services.

An important aspect in Logiera's operation is also open collaboration with the operators. The complexities of modern business make it demanding to discover, initiate and coordinate business to business cooperation. In this thesis, the underlying assumption is that those issues can be solved by the help of emergent social media software.

Brought by changes in society, technology and software, social media entails a set of novel methods for networking, communication, collaboration and information sharing in an online environment. These features account to Web 2.0 a broader phenomenon that refers to the interactivity of web.

Social media services have, in the recent years, become available and common in organizational use. Popularity in the private side, low-cost marketing possibilities and improved workplace communication has given rise to social media's corporate arrival. IT-companies are among the forerunners of deploying social media software. Also large and traditional companies or such umbrella organization as Logiera, are likely to gain communication efficiencies by introducing social media tools. However, they need to take into account a range issues so as to achieve a successful deployment.

This thesis indicates that the deployment, although technology intensive, should consider people as the central part of the deployment. Being aware of users' wants and needs as well as fears and risks help in determining whether there is an actual need for social media tools. And if there is, the inquiry also conveys valuable information for the implementation stage.

To answer those questions, the author of this thesis conducted an interview on Logiera's business network. Out of the 14 networked partners, 11 employees from 6 companies took part in the qualitative, semi-structured interview. Interviewees represented mainly managerial positions.

Accounting to the need question of social media software, the respondents expressed a plain wish for deeper cooperation with other operators. Besides this, it became evident that social media tools might very well succeed to organize comprehensive human resource training. Employees were also rather experienced in using social media.

The main concern in deploying an industry wide social media platform was that the intended users would not have the time to use it. There was also a worry of someone exploiting others if information and best practices are shared openly. Other issues that came up were; how to efficiently manage a flood of content, or conversely what to do with the probability of not getting enough content.

The interview also probed for features and content that would give actual benefits for the networked partners and at the same time raise their motivation to use the application. News feed sharing, professional networking and cooperation were brought up as core features in this respect.

While this thesis gives a theoretical approach through a case study to how a social media software could be deployed in business network, additional studies should be conducted in other real world cases. In regard to Logiera, it is highly advisable to run a follow up survey once the system is running, particularly to assess whether the partners actually benefitted from using an online business community. Further, it would be worth wile to compare those results with businesses that were not members of the cooperative network.

Having seen the advantages and exchanged views with some of the professionals in this area, I am convinced that in the future social business communities, which organize by means of social software, will become common – not only in logistics but in various business fields. If that should happen, this thesis and its end product lay before a basis for further development in that regard.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview sheet

❶ ALAAN LIITTYVÄ KOULUTUS JA ITSENÄINEN OPISKELU

1. **Minkälaista koulutusta tarjoatte työntekijöillenne, ja johdollenne? Minkä tyyppinen koulutus tulee tulevaisuudessa tarpeelliseksi juuri teidän yrityksessä?**

   Nykyinen koulutus Lisättävä koulutus

2. **Onko tähän asti tarjottuihin koulutuksiin tai kursseihin liittynyt itsenäistä, työajan ulkopuolella tapahtuvaa opiskelua?**

3. **Mitä luulette, miten työntekijänne suhtautuu itsenäisen, työpaikan ulkopuolella tapahtuvaan opiskeluun? (ryhmäjohtajat ja tavalliset työntekijät)**

4. **Tapahtuuko uusien parhaiden toimintatapojen jakamista työyhteisössänne tarpeeksi, vai onko työ enemmänkin mene ja opi -tapaista?**

5. **Mitä kanavia käytätte alanne seuraamiseen? Ts. Miten pidätte tietonne ajan tasalla? (esim. lukemalla alan lehtiä, web-sivuja, osallistumalla alan messuihin, ottamalla selvää uusista tekniikoista, ottamalla osaa yhdistyksiin, jne.)**

❷ SOSIAALISEN MEDIAN TUNTEMUS

1. **Mitä seuraavista sosiaalisen median ryhmistä käytätte? (jos ei mitään, siirry kohtaan 6)**

Käytän...	päivittäin	viikoittain	harvemmin kuin viikottain	en käytä	en ole kuullutkaan
1. Blogit (esim. Blogger, WordPress)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Mikroblogit (esim. Twitter, Jaiku)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Sisältöpalvelut (esim. YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Sosiaaliset virtuaali-maailmat (esim. Second Life, Habbo Hotel)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Sosiaaliset yhteisöt (esim. Facebook, LinkedIn)	1	2	3	4	5
6. Yhteisöprojektit (esim. Wikipedia)	1	2	3	4	5
7. Jotain muita, mitä?	1	2	3	4	5

2. Mitä yllä olevista sosiaalisen median ryhmästä käytätte selkeästi työn tukena?

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

3. Oletteko joissain yllä olevista palveluista sisällön tuottajana (esim. kirjoitatte blogia, wikejä, tuotatte videoita jne.)?

1. En, koska
2. Kyllä, missä?

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.

4. Jos ette tuota sisältöä, osallistutteko keskusteluihin ja kommentointiin? Ts. annatte oman äänenne kuulua?

1. En, koska
2. Kyllä, missä?

5. Miten suhtaudutte alan toimijoiden tai samaa ammattia harjoittavien kansa verkottumiseen ja yhteydenpitoon verkkoyhteisöjen avulla?

6. Tredean alainen ohjelma, Logiera aikoo lanseerata logistiikan verkkoyhteisön, jossa voidaan jakaa ja kehittää alan parhaita käytäntöjä, oppia uutta ja yhdistää alan paikallisia ammattilaisia. Mitä hyötyjä ja haittoja näette yllä kuvatussa ympäristössä?

Hyödyt Haitat

7. Mitä toivoisitte tämänkaltaisen ympäristön sisältöön ja ominaisuuksiin?

8. Voitteko selventää syitä siihen, miksi ette käytä sosiaalista mediaa? (jos 1=ei mitään)

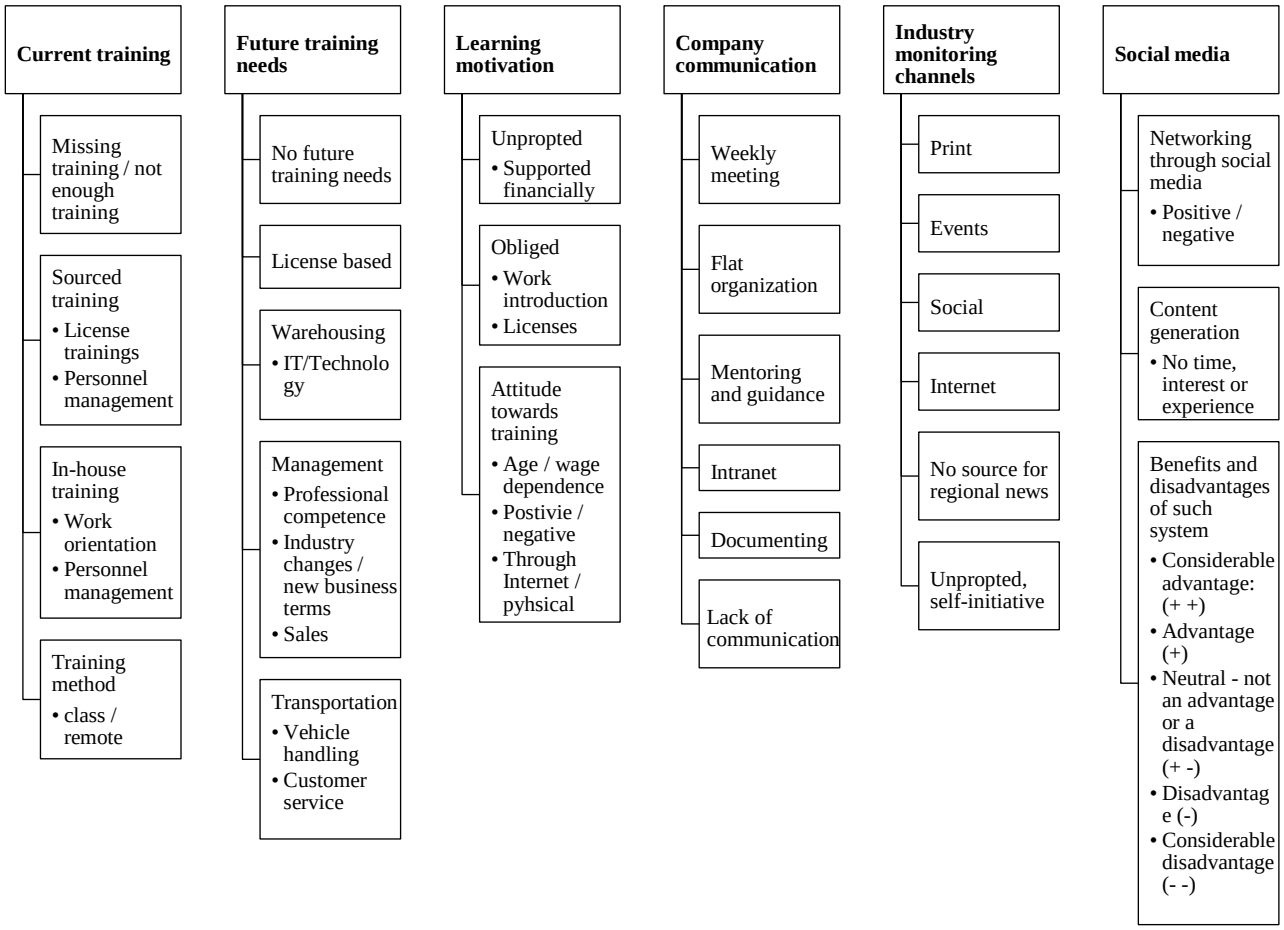
❸ TAUSTATIEDOT

1. Ammattiryhmä

   1.Työntekijä
   2.Johtava asema
   3.Yrittäjä

2. Työkokemus alalta vuosina
3. Toimenkuva
4. Yrityksen koko (työntekijää)
5. Yritys

Appendix 2: A summary of the code labels used in primary data analysis



Appendix 3: Comments on Logiera's social business network

Comments are labeled according to the significance of the content so that

- ＋＋ is considerable advantage;
- ＋ is advantage;
- ＋－ is neutral – not advantage or disadvantage;
- － is disadvantage, and
- －－ is considerable disadvantage.

"Tredean alainen ohjelma, Logiera aikoo lanseerata logistiikan verkkoyhteisön, jossa voidaan jakaa ja kehittää ala parhaita käytäntöjä, oppia uutta ja yhdistää alan paikallisia ammattilaisia. Mitä hyötyjä ja haittoja näette yllä kuvatussa ympäristössä?"		
n	Edut/mahdollisuudet	Haitat/uhat
1	＋－Jakaa perustietoa kuljetusalasta.	－－Ylläpito; kuka vastaa siitä miten ajan tasalla tieto on. －Taustalla on aina se että yritykset eivät halua jakaa tietoa itsestään.
2	＋－Kaiken kaikkiaan informaation hallinta; ＋kykenemme yhdistämään lähetyksiä, jotka eivät ole missään tekemisissä toistensa kanssa. ＋＋Tässä Logieran yhteydessä, tällainen sosiaalinen media, jota kuvasit, tavallaan täydentää sitä kovaa juttua, eli kuljetukset ja fyysisien logistiikkapalveluiden ohjaaminen sillä tiedolla, joka saatetaan alustalle yhteen ja integroiduksi ja saadaan asiat tehtyä viisaasti. Ne toimijat jotka sitä palvelua käyttää, tuntuisi että juuri uutisten ja informaatiopalvelujen käyttö on rationaalinen tapa linkittyä yhdeksi perheeksi myöskin sillä alueella. ＋Etuja on myös varakapasiteetin yhteiset organisaatiot, ja monet muut mahdollisuudet.	－Yrityksillä on jotain informaatiota jota ei sinne kannata laittaa. －Haittaa voi tulla sillä tavalla että joku pyrkii "poimimaan mansikat kakusta," eli ryöstökalastamaan yhteisöä. －－Ongelma on myös järjestellä tietoa, mikä on tärkeää ja mikä ei: tarve itse räätälöitäville lähteille.
3	＋Juridiset asiat, uudistukset yms. tieto leviäisi siellä. ＋Päivän polttavat, ja arkeen liittyvät asiat alueellisesti tai alakohtaisesti. ＋－En usko että työaikaa menisi hukkaan sen käytössä.	－Minkälaisia asioita uskaltaa kertoa, (ei liikesalaisuuksia tai yksilöityjä asiakastietoja) －Jos yrityksen useammat työntekijät käyttää alustaa, ei tahtomattaan lisäisi tietoa kilpailutekijöistä tai asiakkaista. －Onko yrityksellä oma intranet, vai päällekkäisiä järjestelmiä? Kuinka tieto pirstaloituu? Osa tiedosta on täällä osa tuolla, joku päivittää tätä ja joku tuota.
4	＋＋Saa verkostoitua niin että, jos ei ole omaan strategiaan kuuluvaan bisnestä, mutta haluaa asiakkaalle tarjota palvelua löytää verkoston kautta kumppanin. ＋Saa aikaan myynnin kasvua.	＋－Pelko asiakkaan menettämisestä… mutta se ei ole niin konkreettinen pelko. Jos näin kuitenkin käy, pitää katsoa peiliin ja etsiä vika. Pitää luottaa siihen, että oma palvelu on tarpeeksi hyvä. ＋－Kiinnostava juttu pitää olla: foorumin pitää elää kokoajan. Jos saitilla käy kerran viikossa ja materiaali on sama, innostus lopahtaa äkkiä.

5	＋Tieto jakaantuu, linkittyy ja jalostuu. Lisäksi tiedon jako nopeutuu. ＋Ennakkoluulot kilpailijoiden ja toimittajien kesken karisee.	＋＋Ei mitään haittoja
6	＋Hyvä verkostoitumiskanava. ＋Myöskin jonkin sortin markkinointikanava niille, jotka ovat siellä mukana. ＋Aktiivinen keskustelija saisi näkyvyyttä.	－－Perustamisvaiheessa ei saa materiaalia eikä kävijöitä, eikä saa koko sivustoa pyörimään. Ympäristö jää sellaiseksi ”torsoksi”. ＋－Epäilen osaavatko opiskelijat, jos heitä käytetään, tuottaa varteenotettavaa materiaalia?
7	＋Verkostoituminen sellaisten toimijoiden kanssa, joiden kanssa ei yleensä olisi kontaktissa. ＋Mahdollisesti hyvien käytäntöjen, ja sanotaanko, ajatusten leviäminen ja herääminen.	－…Ehkä tietynlainen pelko hyväksikäytöstä: joku ottaisi vain kirsikat kakunpäältä, mutta ei antaisi mitään. Ihmisen perusluonne on ottaa mielellään mutta antaminen on vaikeampaa. －Riskinä myös liikesalaisuuksien leviäminen.
8	＋Verkostoituminen, tiedonjako, uuden oppiminen, hyvin toteutettuna vaivaton tapa löytää kontakteja ja uusia tietoja.	＋－Niin kuin aina, ei julkinen tieto leviää sosiaalisessa mediassa ja internetissä niin nopeasti. Suljettu tai avoin järjestelmä – ei vaikuta mitenkään tiedon leviämiseen. －－Aika on se resurssi jota ei ihmisiltä löydy, ensin tulee omat työt, joita tuntuu olevan jokaisella aika paljon; jääkö tälle aikaa? ＋－Alkuun on suuri riski ettei tietoisuus eikä käyttäjäkunta leviä - pitää osata markkinoida hyvin että tällainen on ja tästä on hyötyä. ＋Suoraan työhön liittyvänä kanavana käyttäisin sitä, mutta ehkä iltasella silloin kun on vähän aikaa.
9	＋Verkkoinnovoinnin kehitys ja nopeus; ＋yhteistyön helppous; ＋＋alan imagoa parantava.	－Ennakkoasenteet ("ei hyötyä"); －valmiudet käyttää; －Kuka on aktiivinen? －Halutaanko jakaa omaa osaamista?
10	＋Tiedon siirtyminen saattaa parantua ja nopeutua; ＋－työtehtävät pysyy ennallaan (kun voi opiskella netissä).	
11	＋Positiivinen asia. Tiedon kulku ja tavoitettavuus paranee	－Ihmiset eivät käytä

Appendix 4: Features and content for the social business network service

n	”Mitä toivoisitte tämänkaltaisen ympäristön sisältöön ja ominaisuuksiin?”
1	Kuljetuspuolen vaatimukset ja perusteet; mikä on niin kutsuttua "faktatietoa". Mitä tarvitset kun lähetät tavaraa Indokiinaan. Tietopankki-tyylinen. Palvelua käyttävät yritykset varmasti haluaisivat sen olevan suljettu, mutta avoimuudella saataisiin parempaa tiedon jakoa. Kirjautumissysteemillä voidaan vaikuttaa tähän. Uutisten kollektiivinen lukeminen vaatisi myös käyttäjätasoja.
2	Järjestelmässä voisi olla tasoja: Logieran operaattorit ja asiakkaat, ja kaikki jotka diggaavat. Kannattaa tehdä uusintakierros kysymyksien kanssa, kun jotain on saatu aikaiseksi.
3	Käytettävyys: kun akuutteja asioita tai hyviä juttuja tulee, voisi helposti, mobiilisti laittaa asiat sinne. Koulutukseen ja asiakaspalveluun liittyvä materiaalipankki varmasti auttaisi ja tukisi, mutta jos itse räätälöi palvelu kokonaisuuden, viitsisikö sitä laittaa jakoon. Asiakaskunnalta toiveita ja palautetta logistiikkaan (ei valmiita toimintaratkaisuja, mutta toiveita) Logistiikka-alaan, yrityksiin ja yrittäjiin liittyviä uutisia kävisin varmasti katsomassa ja laittaisin myös omia uutisia sinne. Tietyllä tapaa mainoskanava: positiiviset asiat jaetaan, tosin negatiivisia ei.
4	Riippuu toteutustavasta. Rajapinta asiakkaaseen nopeuttaa oston helppoutta. Avoimuus on se mitä itse ajattelen parhaana. Jos ympäristö on alan toimijoiden sisäinen, miten siitä saadaan alaa kehitettyä? Miten tällä alalla luonnostaan tulee momenttia. Miten logistiikka-alalla voidaan blogata? Viini-maailmassa voidaan blogata uusista viineistä. Ehkä logistiikka-alalla voidaan kertoa esim. uusista autoista, ja niiden tekniikasta. Kohderyhmä saattaa olla pieni eikä autoja tule niin usein tosin. Rekrytointi saattaisi olla yksi vetonaula. Asiakaspalautteet voisi kerätä sinne: risut ja ruusut Facebookista opittua: siellä voisi olla jonkinlaisia pelejä (rakenna oma varasto yms.) Yrityksien ja työntekijöiden profiilit saattaisi olla hyvä olla.
5	Se että se toimisi yhteen alkeellisten tietojärjestelmien kanssa (tärkein ominaisuus). Halpaa tiedonvälitystä: nopea laittaa ylös nopea purkaa alas. Ei saisi missään nimessä lähteä tekemään tiettyä järjestelmää, pitäisi olla äärettömän joustava. Ilmainen kaikille Logieran sidosryhmille. Pystytään hallitsemaan nykyisillä koneilla, web-pohjainen kuvio. Isot [logistiikka] yritykset pitäisi ottaa myös mukaan fiksusti. Profiilisivut voisivat olla hyvä asia, mutta asiakkaalle ihan sama kuka sitä tekee. Toisaalta kuljetukseen liittyy paljon tunteita ja inhimillisiä taustatekijöitä.
6	Keskitetysti alan uutiset; yritysesittelyitä liikenne suunnittelusta; varastoinnista, ja näihin suora keskusteluyhteys. (näitä on työläs etsiä Googlesta); Työmarkkinaportaali, alan työpaikkoja tai harjoittelijapaikkoja voisi ilmoittaa ilmaiseksi sinne.
7	Eri toimijoiden, ja heidän toiminnan löytäminen ja tunnistaminen (jäsentely ja etsintä) Profiilisivu yritystasolla ja toisella tasolla itse työntekijöille. Uutisten jako erittäin kannattava idea!
8	Tavarankäsittely ja varastointi; logistiikkaan liittyvät tietojärjestelmät (tietotarve); kontaktit ja verkostoituminen; Jos ympäristössä esiintyy omana persoonanaan henkilökohtaisesti ideasta tulisi suositumpi ja helpompi. Voisin kuvitella tuottavani materiaalia, kun näen paljon miten eri yritykset tekee samoja asioita eri tavalla. Usein kun itse kertoo ongelmista ja eroista tällä tavalla oman yrityksen ideakin paranee.
9	Blogit; Projektit alan opiskelijoille; webinaarit/seminaarit; verkostoitumispalvelu; ehkä kansallinen rekry-kanava; Tutkimustuloksia; alaan liittyviä lainsäädäntöjä
10	−
11	Esimerkkejä alan toimintatavoista, esim. videoita apuvälineiden oikeasta käytöstä.

Appendix 5: Implementation plan for Logiera's online business community

Sisältö: 1. käyttöönottosuunnitelma, 2. pilotin valinta ja suunnittelu, 3. palvelun käyttöönotto ja ylläpito, 4. tulosten mittaaminen sekä arviointi

1 Logieran yhteisöllisen palvelun käyttöönottosuunnitelma

Tärkeimpiä asioita käyttöönotossa: selvä tarkoitus ja tarve; liiketoimintalähtöisyys; johdon viesti ja sitouttaminen; riittävät resurssit; pilotointi ja siemensisältö.

1.1 Edellytysten tarkistus (onko tarvetta?)

Taustavaikuttajat, joista ollaan tietoisia: eläkepoistuminen, työvoiman saanti ja kouluttaminen, alan laajeneminen, kasvavat työvoima- ja osaamistarpeet sekä Internet-sukupolvi.

Haastattelusta varmistetut tekijät: toimijoiden välistä yhteistyötä voidaan lisätä ja sille on myös kysyntää. Koulutusten laajamittainen ja pitkäjänteinen toteuttaminen on alan haaste.

1.2 Hankkeen tarkoitus, tavoitteet ja mittarit

1. Tavoite (olemassaolon peruste)

Logistiikka-alan kollektiivinen kehittäminen, parhaiden käytänteiden jako sekä työntekijöiden koulutus ja jatkuva työssäoppiminen

2. Strategia (miten tavoitteeseen päästään?)

Luodaan eloisa ja riippumaton yhteisö toimijoista, työvoimasta ja koulutuksen tarjoajista ja rakennetaan yhteisölle toimintapuitteet sekä virtuaali- että reaalimaailmassa

3. Mittarit (tavoitteen mukaisen kehityksen valvonta)

Määritellään ennakkoon mitä indikaattoreita tarkastellaan ja millä aikavälillä. Samalla asetetaan indikaattoreille tavoitelukemat. Parempi valita muutama selkeä indikaattori kuin useita vaikeasti seurattavia. Tässä mahdollisia esimerkkejä:

a. Rekisteröityneiden käyttäjien määrä ja kehitystrendi aikavälillä x suhteessa potentiaaliseen käyttäjämäärään/asetettuun tavoitteeseen

b. Tapahtumastatistiikka (uusia keskusteluita, kommentteja, sisään kirjautumisia, lukukertoja, tykkäämisiä, linkityksiä ja palvelussa kulutettua aikaa aikavälillä x, jne.)

c. Ulkoiset indikaattorit (jäsenyritysten kokonaisliikevaihdon, työntekijämäärän tai asiakasmäärän muutokset; konkreettisiin tuotteisiin, palveluihin tai uusien yhteistyötilanteisiin johtaneiden ideoiden ja määrä ja niiden syntymisnopeus)

d. Web-koulutuksen loppuun asti suorittaneiden, niihin osallistuneiden ja hakeneiden määrä; koulutuksen laatu ja soveltuvuus käytännön tilanteisiin

e. Käyttäjäpalaute sisällöstä ja toimivuudesta

1.3 Työkalujen valinta

1. SaaS-pohjainen palvelu, joko oman pilven kautta tai ulkoistettuna

2. Kaupallinen (ei open source), perustuen muihin suunniteltuihin tietojärjestelmiin (yhtenäinen kokonaisuus: kun muut sovellukset ovat kaupallisia, on myös yhteisöratkaisu kaupallinen)

3. Palvelu on kiinteä osa Logieran koko tietojärjestelmää: integroitu muihin rajapintoihin, kuten asiakas- ja toimijanäkymiin

4. Ulospäin saumattomasti linkittyvä: tietojen ja päivitysten vienti ja tuonti mahdollista muista web 2.0 sovelluksista (esim. del.icio.us, YouTube, Flickr, LinkedIn, Digg yms.)

5. Tukeutuu tiedon järkevään ja tehokkaaseen jäsentelyyn: jokainen löytää itselle merkittävän tiedon dynaamisten ja monipuolisten tiedonhakuominaisuuksien avulla

1.4 Aineen ja sisällön kuvaus, rajaaminen ja tulevien trendien mukainen ennakkosuunnittelu

1. Sisällön määrittely ja rajaus

    a. Rakenne ja sisältö muovautuu web-alustan käytön aikana käyttäjien toimien mukaan: toiminnassa syntyvä rakenne (emerging structure).

    b. Tulevat trendit tulee ottaa aineiston ja oppimateriaalien jatko suunnittelussa huomioon.

    c. Sisältö on interaktiivista, ei staattista (kommentointi, tykkääminen, tähti-arviointi, merkitseminen jne.)

    d. Tiettyjen alueiden / sisällön näkyvyys riippuu käyttäjätasosta

    e. Logistiikkaan liittyvä aineisto

        i. Parhaiden käytänteiden videot (tuotetaan toimijaverkosta; käytänteen jakaja palkitaan esim. ilmaisella käyttöjaksolla / korotetulla käyttäjätasolla)

        ii. Internal job market: työvoiman kysynnän ja tarjonnan kohdistaminen (työntekijäkapasiteetin hallinta koko verkostona; työvoimapoolit, Arja Raukola Oy)

        iii. Yritysverkon sisäiset uutiset (esimerkki automaattisista uutissyötteistä, RSS) ja alan yleiset uutiset ja muut uutiset

        iv. Ajostatistiikan seuranta (SeeMoto, Meshworks Wireless)

        v. Oppisopimuspaikat, harjoittelupaikat, opinnäytetyö- ja tutkijapaikat yritysverkostossa

vi. Päivän kysymykset

vii. Tapahtumat (messut, Logy, seminaarit, foorumit, yms.)

viii. Tietopankki (toimijoiden tiedot, logistiikkaan liittyvät ohjeet, toimintatavat, incoterms-ehdot)

ix. Avoin / teemakeskeinen keskustelu

f. Koulutusaineisto (tarve tiedustellaan kentältä)

i. Lainsäädännölliset muutokset

ii. Asiakaspalvelu

iii. Henkilöstöjohtaminen

iv. Tekniset ohjelmistot ja laitteet

v. Logistiikan avainsanasto maahanmuuttajille

vi. Perusteelliset opintokokonaisuudet, eritoten teoria osuudet (esim. trukin käyttökoulutuksen teoria)

1. Certified by Logiera –tunnistus koulutuksen käyneille työntekijöille

2. Be lean be green –sertifikaatti yritystason kehittämiselle

3. Yleinen / off-topic

a. Harrasteet, uutiset, mielipiteet, kysymykset, suosittelut, yms. luppoajan hyötykäyttöön

g. Siemen sisältö ja sen tuottaminen

6. Tuodaan ympäristöön asteittain sisältöä: x määrä y ajassa. Esimerkkejä esivalmistellusta video-, ääni-, kuva- ja tekstimateriaalista:

i. Toimijoiden haastattelut

ii. Yritys-, toimintatapa-, asiakas-, sekä tuote ja palveluesittelyt (toteutus esim. kiertämällä toimijoita toimittajaryhmällä opiskelijalähtöisesti)

iii. Logieraan liittyvät palveluoppaat / palvelut (jalostuvat avoimessa dialogissa)

iv. ”Tiesitkö että…? / Eikö olisi hienoa jos…?” -avaukset

v. Jäsenyritysten johtajien kirjoittamat artikkelit (pyynnöstä)

2 Pilotin valinta ja suunnittelu (vaiheittainen käyttöönotto)

Käytännössä yhteisö voidaan luoda ennen kuin web-alusta on olemassakaan. Kutsutaan ennalta valittu pilottiyhteisö koolle, tutustutaan, tehdään hankkeen tavoitteet ja toimintatavat selväksi, jaetaan tehtävät ja vastuu, ja lujitetaan yhteisön luottamusta ja henkeä joillain yhteisillä aktiviteeteilla.

2.1 Pilotin toteutus

1. Ensimmäisen version valmituttua aloitetaan esim 1kk pilotti pienellä käyttäjäryhmällä
2. Mukaan muutama ydintoimija Logieran yritysverkostosta; 10-20 käyttäjää; 2-3 yritystä
3. Annetaan käyttäjäkoulutus ja ohjeistus perustoiminnoista (demovideo)
4. Kerätään kokemukset, selvitetään työkalujen toimivuus ja tehdään tarvittavat muutokset

2.2 Tietoturvan käsittely

1. *Avoin web-palvelu* (ei rajattu tietyn yrityksen tai palomuurin taakse)
2. *Single log-in -käytäntö* (yhdellä tunnuksella kaikkiin Logieran palveluihin sisään)
3. *Access management* (käyttäjätasosta riippuvat näkymät: 1. sidosryhmään kuuluva yritys, 2. asiakas, 3. muu)
4. *Ohjeet siitä, mitä sisällöksi hyväksytään* (tulee olla sävyltään kannustava – ei rajoittava)
5. Jokainen esiintyy omana itsenään

3 Palvelun käyttöönotto

Tärkeimpiä asioita: roolit ja vastuut, tukihenkilöt, code of conduct ja oikea yrityskulttuuri.

3.1 Roolit ja vastuut

1. Ylimmän johdon vastuunotto ja sitoutuminen uusiin toimintatapoihin ja menettelyohjeisiin välttämätöntä. (Joko sitoutuu tai ei –hieman sitoutunut ei voi olla)
2. Pääkäyttäjät (admin)
    a. käytön seuranta (indikaattorit, palaute, sisältö)
    b. käyttöoikeuksien myöntäminen, muuntaminen ja poistaminen
    c. mittarien ja palautteen seuranta ja eteenpäin välittäminen
    d. aktiivinen tiedonvaihto moderaattoreiden välillä
3. Puheenjohtajat (ns. moderaattorit/Coaching Network)

a. vastuussa oman aihealueen/jäsenyrityksen huolehtimisesta ja ylläpidosta

b. keskusteluun kannustaminen, ideoiden välitys ja tiedottaminen

c. käytön opastaminen

d. säännöllisesti toistuvat tapaamiset muiden puheenjohtajien/moderaattoreiden kanssa (foorumi)

i. ”Logistics Friday”

ii. parhaiden ideoiden jatkokäsittely, eteenpäinvienti ja esittely

e. Kirjoittajat/lukijat

3.2 Tiedotus ja koulutus

1. Tiedotetaan (ajoissa!):

a. Miksi yhteisöpalvelu otetaan käyttöön, mihin sillä pyritään, ja mitä hyötyä siitä on toimijoille (em. tavoitteet)

b. Milloin palvelu valmistuu (ellei ole vielä valmis)

c. Mistä palvelu löytyy, miten jäseneksi pääsee ja keneltä saa opastusta

d. Keitä palvelu koskee ja mitä se edellyttää käyttäjiltä

e. Mitä / ketä palvelusta löytyy nyt ja tulevaisuudessa

2. Käytön aikainen tiedotus

a. Viimeisimmistä tapahtumista, mielenkiinnon kohteista, yhteydenottopyynnöistä, uutisista, palkitsemisista, tilaisuuksista, web-seminaareista, kehitystuloksista, jne. lähetetään lyhennetty katsaus käyttäjän sähköpostiin.

3. Käyttöönottokoulutus

a. Logiera kouluttaa puheenjohtajat ja vastaavasti puheenjohtajat kouluttavat työntekijät omassa yrityksessään

b. Esim. video-opastus palvelun pääominaisuuksista

c. Tukihenkilöt, pilottiryhmään osallistuneet ja kokeneet käyttäjät kertovat ja opastavat työyhteisöä, jos tarvetta

3.3 Ohjeistus ja pelisäännöt (code of conduct)

1. Perustuu jäsenyritysten ja Logieran eettisiin sääntöihin ja toimintatapoihin.

2. Kertoo kaikille käyttäjille sosiaalisen median käytöstä, sekä sen tarkoituksesta (samalla tapaa kuin tämä paperi)

3. Vähentää väärinkäsityksien, epämiellyttävien tilanteiden ja tietovuotoriskien mahdollisuutta

4. Osa uusien työntekijöiden orientaatiota koko toimijaverkossa

5. Sävyltään mahdollisuuksien mukaan kannustava (sitä vastoi että listaisi rajoituksia, kertoo minkälainen käyttäytyminen kehittää yhteisöä ja tuottaa käyttäjälle arvoa. Esim. ei ”Älä käytä muiden tuottamaa sisältöä kertomatta lähdettä”, vaan ”Kun käytät muiden tuottamaa sisältöä, muista mainita lähde.”)

3.4 Tukihenkilöt /Coaching Netowrk/moderaattorit (löytyy myös kohdasta roolit ja vastuut)

1. Toimijaverkoston yrityksiä pyydetään nimeämään 1 tai 2 vastuuhenkilöä, jotka ovat ominaisuuksiltaan:

    a. hyviä kommunikoimaan

    b. yhteistyökykyisiä

    c. proaktiivisia

    d. uskaltaa ottaa vastuuta ja haluaa näyttää osaamisensa

    e. logistiikasta, tietotekniikasta ja yhteisöllisestä mediasta innostuneita

    f. haluavat olla mukana uudistamassa alaa

2. Tukihenkilön tehtävä on määräaikainen: uusitaan esim. vuosittain.

3. Tehtävä tukee henkilön uraa tulevaisuudessa, kehittää esimiestaitoja, avaa aitiopaikan verkostoitumiselle ja alan uusimmille tapahtumille, sekä luo mahdollisuuden yritystoiminnan kehittämiselle.

4. Tukihenkilöt koulutetaan erikseen: esim. 1-2 päivän koulutus, jossa painotetaan erityisesti tutustumiseen ja yhteishengen luomiseen.

5. Tehtävään kuuluu ajoittaiset kehitystapaamiset muiden yritysverkostoon kuuluvien tukihenkilöiden kanssa.

3.5 Edellytysten varmistaminen

1. Tukevatko jäsenyritysten ja Logieran rakenteet työvälineiden käyttöä?
Tarvitaan yhtenäinen yritysilmapiiri ja -kulttuuri, selkeät ohjeet ja päätelaitteet.

    a. Esimerkki Logieran ja toimijaverkoston yrityskulttuurista

        i. Avoimuuteen rohkaiseva (hyväksytään kysymykset, tiedonjakaminen ja kyseenalaistaminen).

        ii. Uskalias (Hyväksytään epätäydellisyys ja keskeneräisyys. Kirjoitusasu, ideat ja ajatukset voivat olla raakileita. Kypsyminen tapahtuu dialogissa.).

iii. Oppiva ja vuorovaikutteinen (keskustelua syntyy paljon ja monilla tasoilla ja siihen kannustetaan)

iv. Yksilöllisyyttä kunnioittava (Henkilökohtaisuus korostuu ja hierarkia madaltuu sosiaalisessa mediassa. Jokaista arvostetaan taustasta riippumatta.)

b. Yritysverkon jäsenten tekniset valmiudet käyttää web-palvelua

i. Toimihenkilöillä on henkilökohtaiset tietokoneet (paras tilanne on huolintaliikkeillä, joissa työ on lähinnä päätetyötä)

ii. Useissa tapauksissa työntekijät (kuljettajat, varastotyöntekijät jne.) pääsevät käsiksi päätelaitteisiin kuljetuksen aikana tai taukotiloissa. Henkilökohtaisia tietokoneita ei kuitenkaan ole.

4 Palvelun ylläpito

2. Tiedon tuottaminen

7. Tiedon tuottamista ei tarvitse rajoittaa tai katkaista (tallennustilakustannukset ovat merkityksettömiä) – jokainen tiedonkappale voidaan säilyttää.

3. Web-yhteisön johtaminen

a. Tiedon tuottamisen resursointi ja organisointi

i. Johdon tulee selkeästi viestiä tukensa palvelun käyttöön, kannustaa omalla esimerkillään, ja muistuttaa viesti tarvittaessa

ii. Tiedon tuottaminen on työtä. Jos se on työn tai työssä kehittymisen kannalta tärkeää siihen löytyy myös aikaa ja motivaatiota

iii. Palvelun tapahtumat otetaan mukaan osaksi viikkopalavereita

b. Ajattelun johtaminen

i. Virtuaaliyhteisössä esimiestoiminta on usein ajatusten johtamista

ii. Esimiehet / ajatusjohtajat nostavat esille kulloinkin ajankohtaisia teemoja, jotka käynnistävät jatkokeskusteluja

iii. He myös arvioivat aiempien keskusteluiden kypsymistä, ja tilanteen mukaan jatkojalostavat niitä (tutkimushankkeiksi, uusiksi palveluiksi, liiketoiminnan parannuskohteiksi, jne.)

iv. Teemat voivat vaihdella paljon mutta niiden viestisävyn tulee aktivoida muita jäseniä (dialogi ei käynnisty toistamalla itsestäänselvyyksiä)

c. Käytön seuranta

8. Seurataan säännöllisesti kolmea aluetta; seuranta on vastuutettu tietyille henkilöille (ks. vastuut ja roolit):

    i. kertyvää sisältöä ja sen oikeellisuutta

    ii. asetettujen tavoitteiden toteutumista (indikaattorit)

    iii. palvelun hyödyllisyyttä (käyttäjäpalautteet)

    d. Ongelmien ja ristiriitojen ratkominen

        i. Sanktio siinä tapauksessa että joku käyttäjistä toimii pelisääntöjen, yrityskulttuurin tai hyvän tavan vastaisesti

        ii. Ongelmiin tartutaan välittömästi ja ratkaisut etsitään viipymättä

        iii. Ojennuksista ja huomautuksista vastaa ennalta määrätty vastuuhenkilö

        iv. Omalla nimellä esiintyminen ehkäisee häiriökäyttäytymistä, mutta tilanteen ilmentyessä pitää käyttäjillä olla mahdollisuus ilmoittaa siitä valvojille (report abusive behavior)

    e. Palkitseminen

9. Palkitsemisperusteet määritellään selkeästi ja läpinäkyvästi (kaikki tietävät mistä ja miten palkitaan)

    i. Pisteitä annetaan määrästä ja laadusta (tuotetun sisällön määrä ja siihen liittyvät muiden käyttäjien kommentit / arvostelut / tykkäämiset jne.)

    ii. Pisteet muodostavat avoimen ranking-listan (eniten lähetettyjä kommentteja, uusia ideoita, haasteita; kuukauden paras kommentti, artikkeli, neuvo, linkki jne.)

    iii. Kun käyttäjä näyttää omaa osaamistaan, on kaikkein tärkeintä että se huomioidaan ja että hän saa huomioinnin kautta arvostamiltaan kollegoilta tunnistusta. Siis konkreettinen palkkio ei ole keskeinen asia, vaan sen kautta saavutettu tunnustus.

    iv. Palkitsemien toteutetaan mahdollisimman pian ja siinä tuodaan selkeästi esille palkittavan erinomainen osallistumispanos ja sen tuomat hyödyt.

    v. Rahalliseen hyötyyn johtavat ideat ja ratkaisut pitäisi myös palkita rahallisesti (esim. ”jos minulla on idea joka antaa sinulle takuu varmasti ilman mitään lisäkustannuksia tai töitä 1000 e, kuinka paljon sinun pitäisi maksaa siitä?”)

    f. Ihmisten innostaminen pysymään aktiivisina

        i. Aktiivisuuteen innostaa uuden oppiminen, ammatillisten neuvojen ja ideoiden saaminen ja verkostojen laajentaminen

ii. Passiivisuuteen johtaa yhteisön epäselvä tarkoitus ja sekava kohderyhmä

iii. Coaching Netowork/Puheenjohtajien asema korostuu aktiivisuuden ylläpitämisessä. Heidän tavoitteena on elättää yhteisöä tuottamalla/tuomalla asiallista, ammattimaista ja hyödyllistä sisältöä, innostamalla muita keskusteluun.

iv. Jos yhteisö kaikesta huolimatta yhteisö ei toimi tai se tunnetaan turhaksi, pitää uskaltaa lopettaa yhteisö ja suunnitella muita vaihtoehtoja

5 Tulosten mittaaminen ja arviointi

10. Määrättyjä indikaattoreita, jotka esiteltiin kohdassa 1.2.3. verrataan säännöllisin väliajoin (1-2 kertaa vuodessa) asetettuihin päämääriin. Tuloksista, yhteisön kehityssuunnasta, palautteesta ja niihin liittyvistä jatkotoimista kerrotaan avoimesti esim. yhteisön kehitykseen liittyvässä blogissa. Avoin tulosten käsittely edesauttaa käyttäjien tarpeiden mukaista kehitystä.

4. Toimintatulokset

a. Pilotin jälkeiset tulokset

b. Käyttöönottovaiheen jälkeiset tulokset

i. käyttäjien määrä

ii. sisällön määrä

iii. palaute palvelun käytettävyydestä ja hyödyllisyydestä

5. Vaikuttavuustulokset

a. Vaikutukset jäsenyritysten liiketoimintaan: HR, asiakassuhteet, talous ja kustannukset, prosessit, tuottavuus, näkyvyys (otettava huomioon liiketoimintaan vaikuttavat tekijät, jotka eivät riipu sosiaalisesta mediasta: esim. kansantalous)

b. Tuloksista tiedotetaan avoimesti

6. Tulosten hyödyntäminen käytön aikaisessa jatkuvassa kehitystyössä tai vastaavasti, tarvittaessa, yhteisöpalvelun alasasjossa.